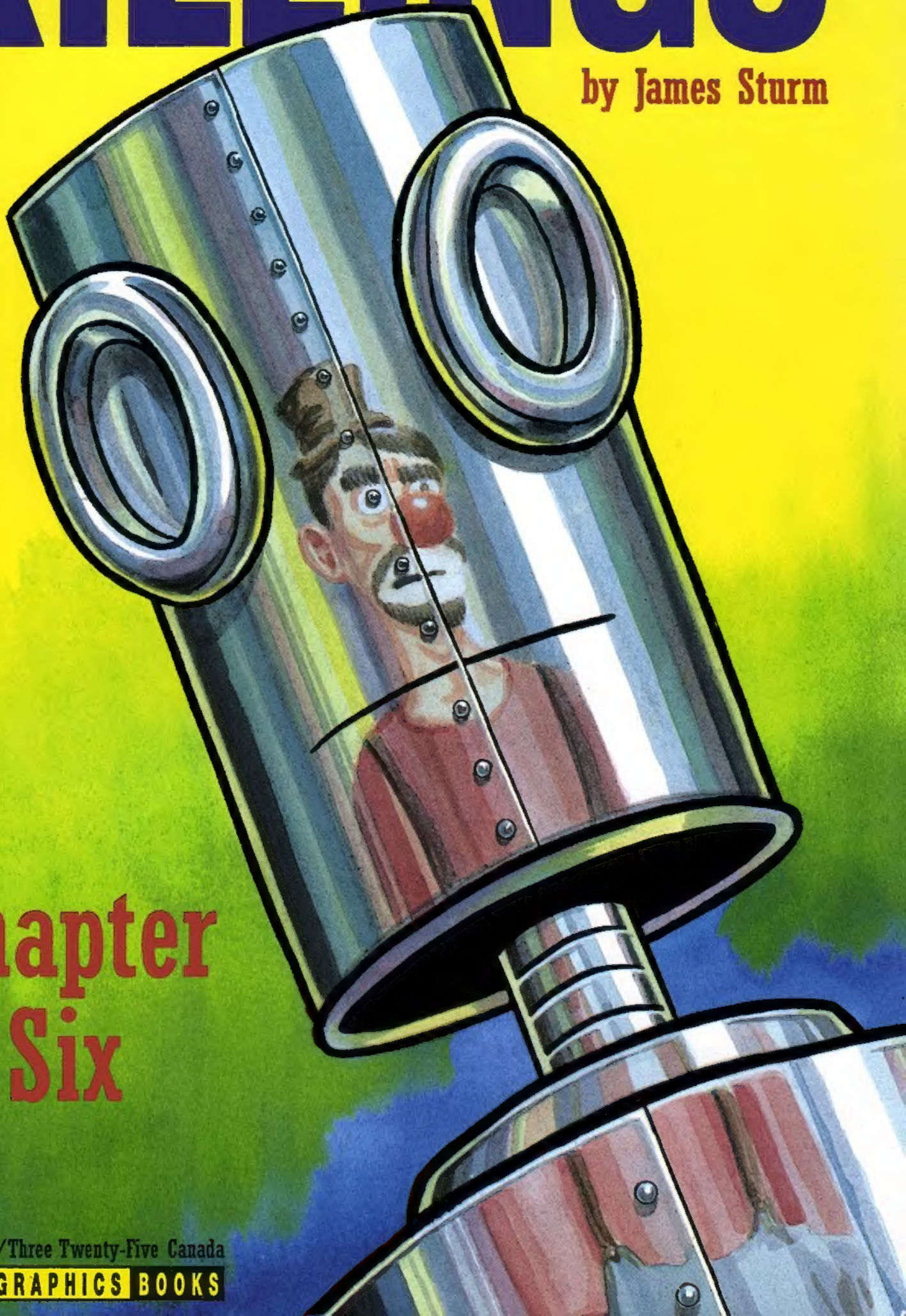


The Cereal **KILLINGS**

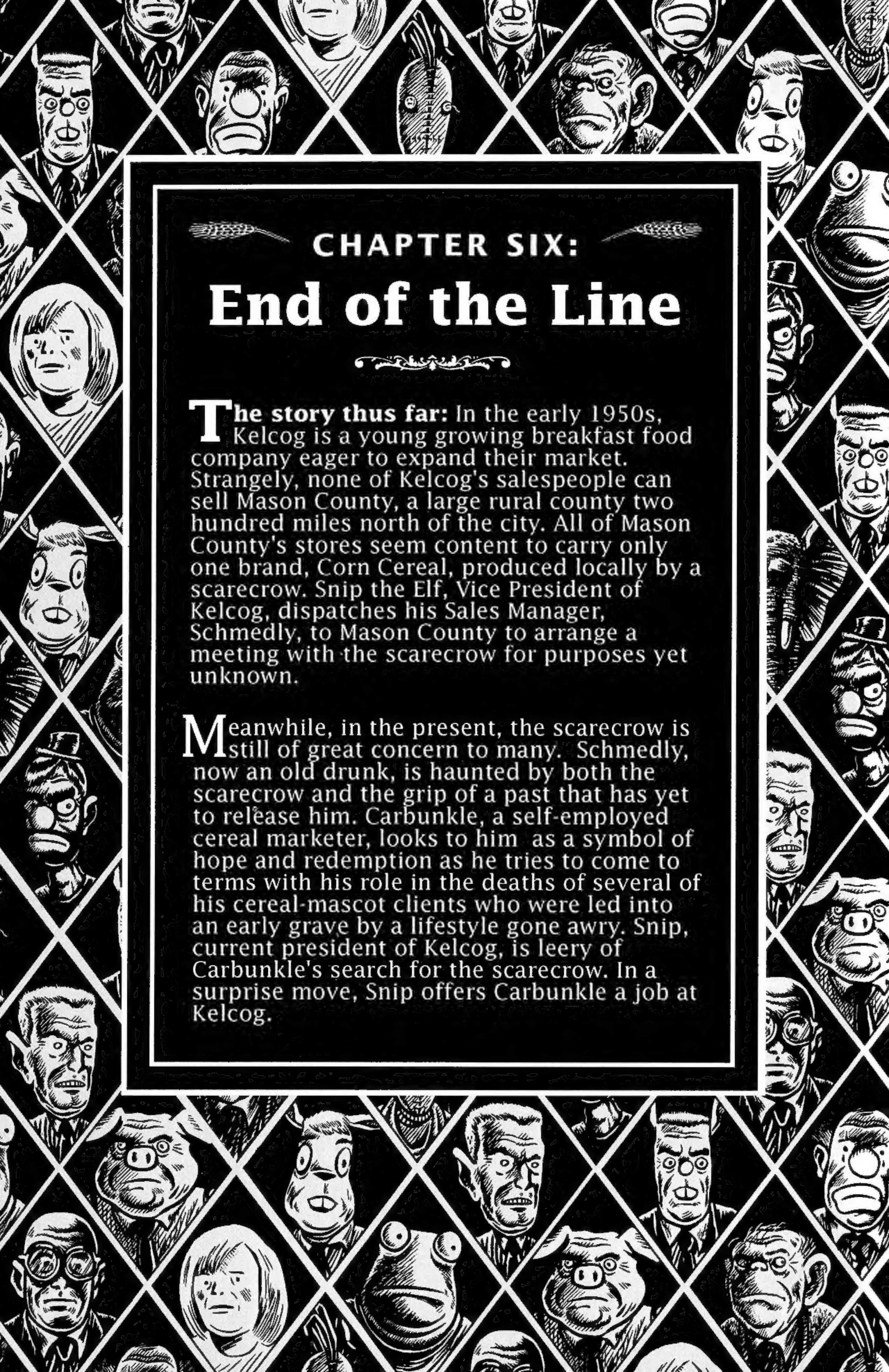
by James Sturm



Chapter Six

Two Fifty/Three Twenty-Five Canada

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

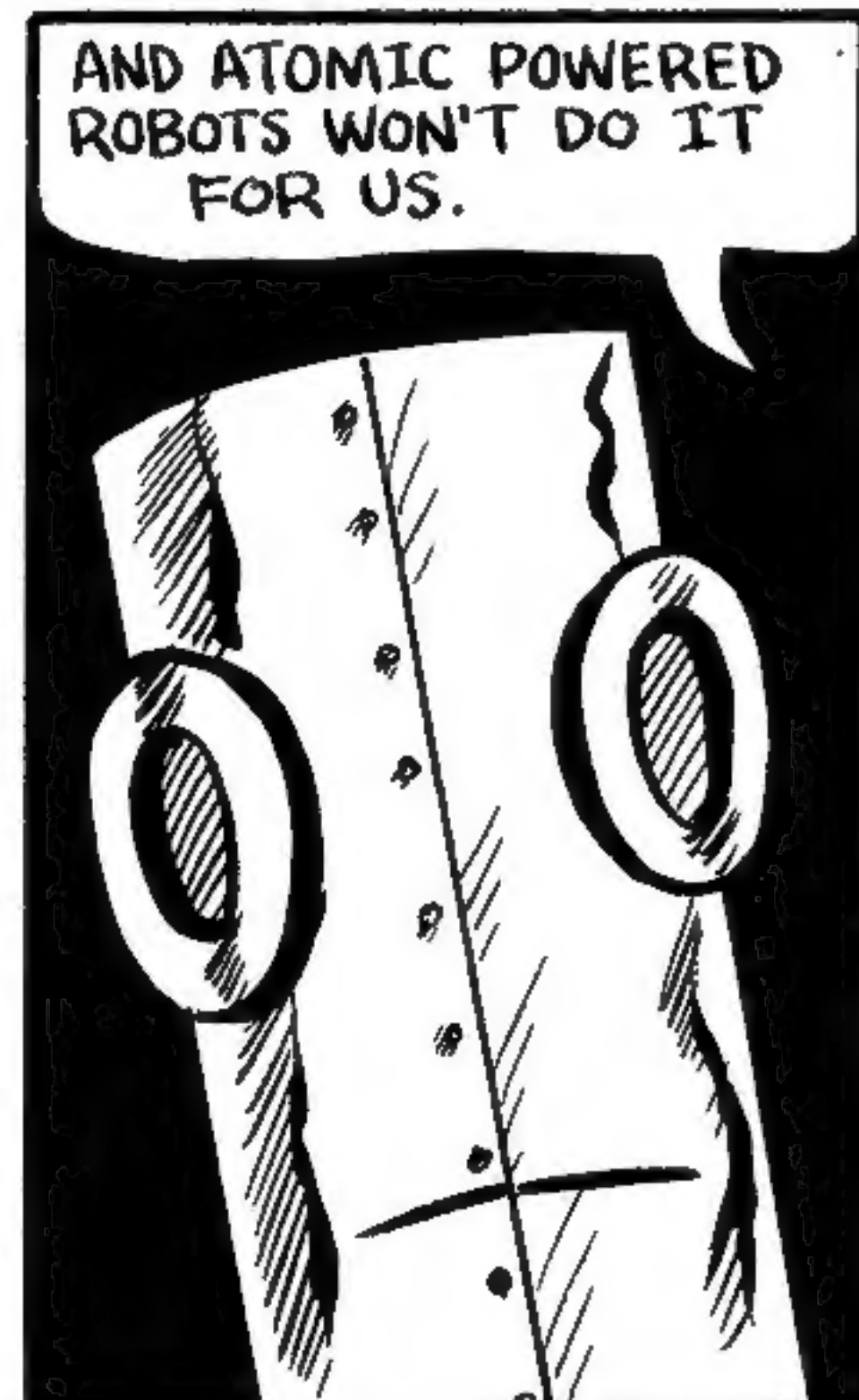
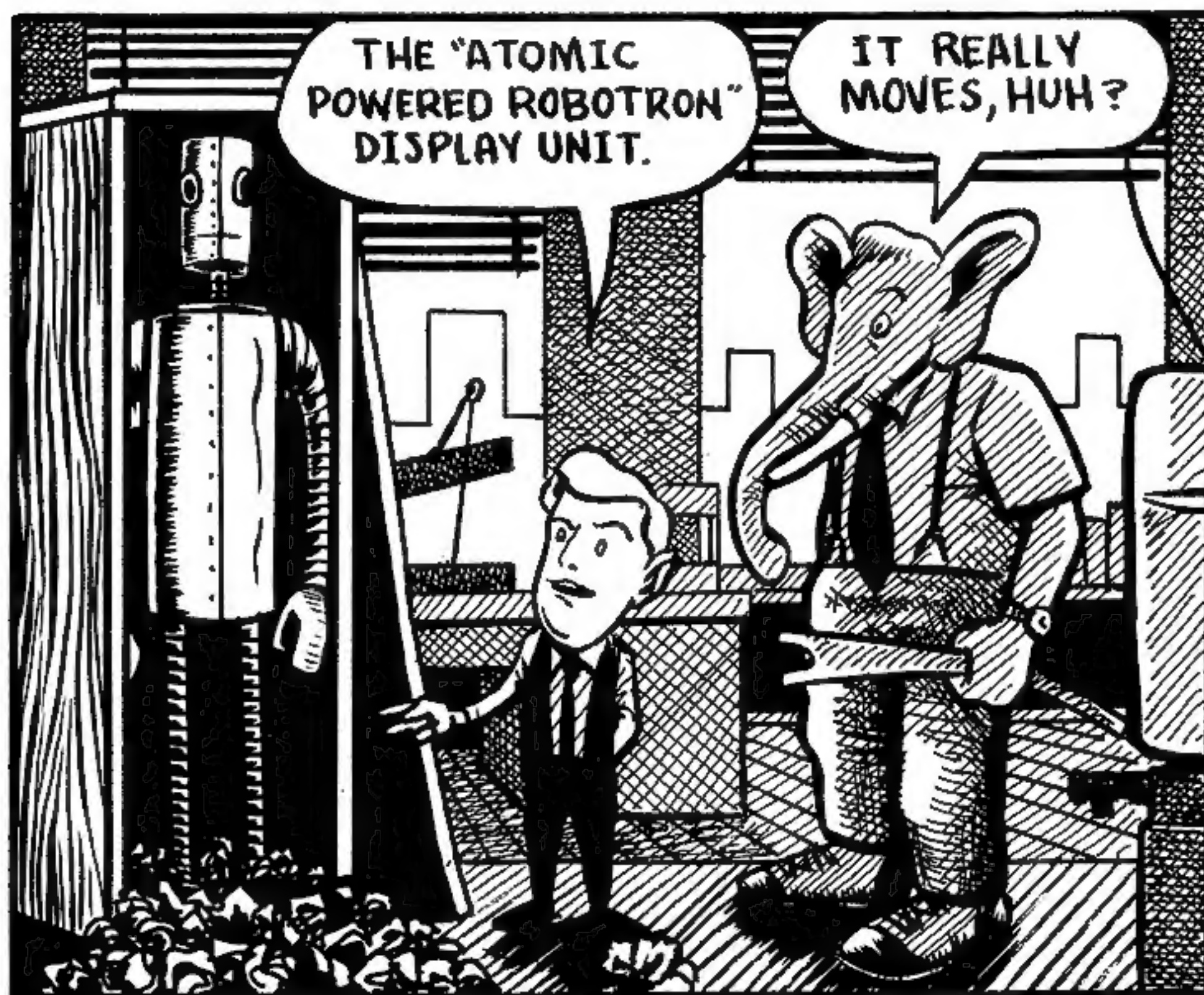
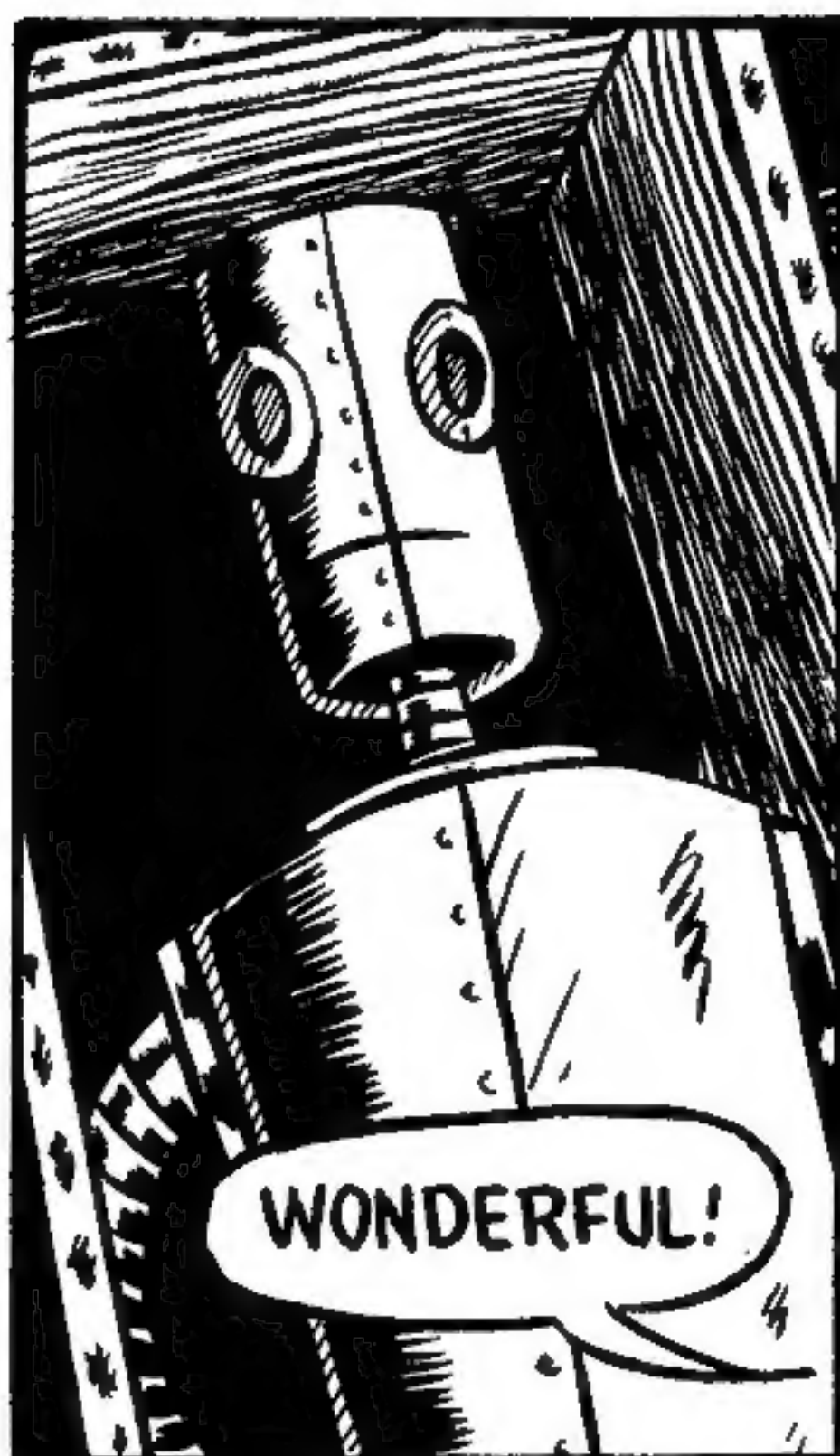
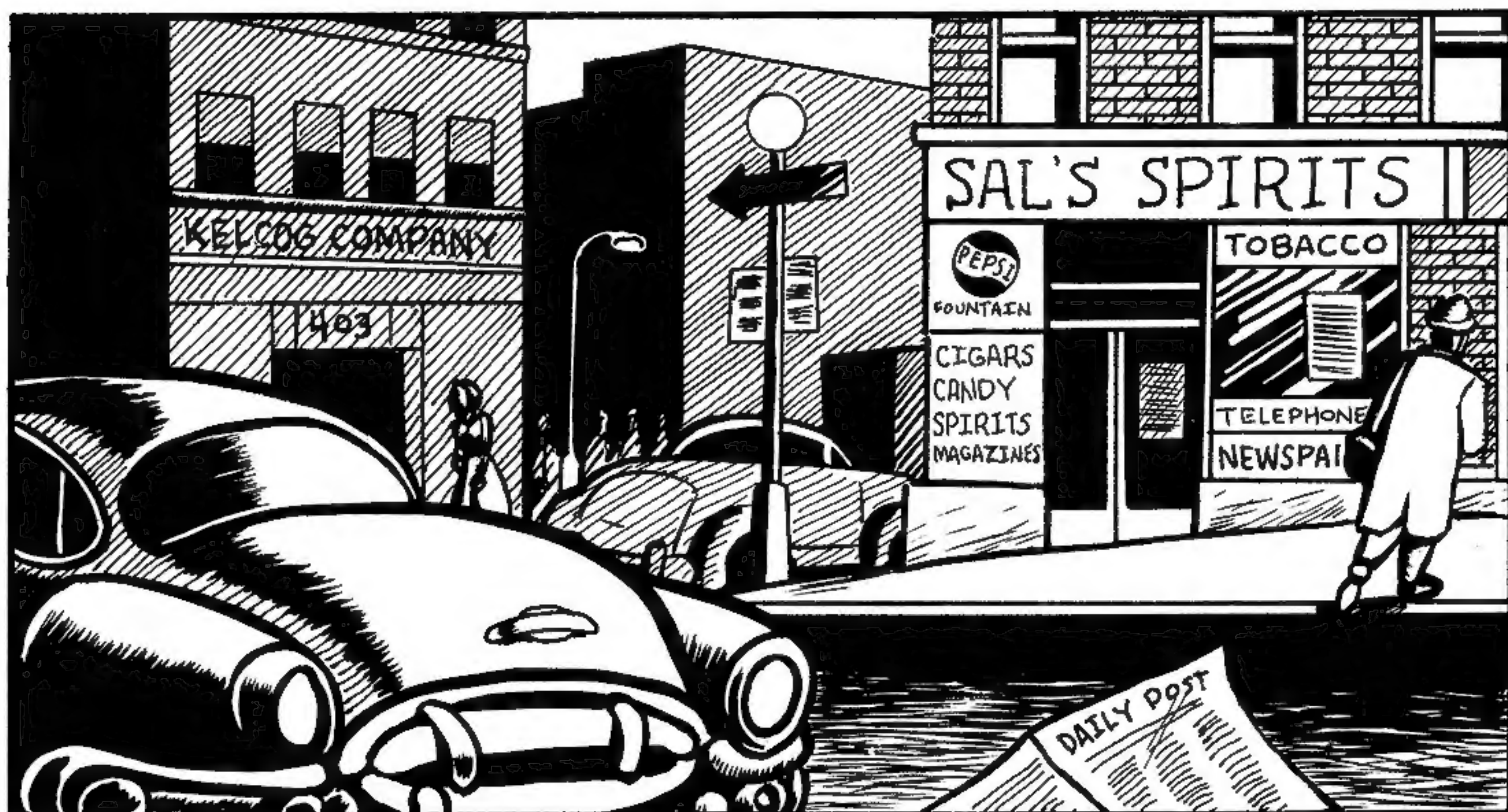


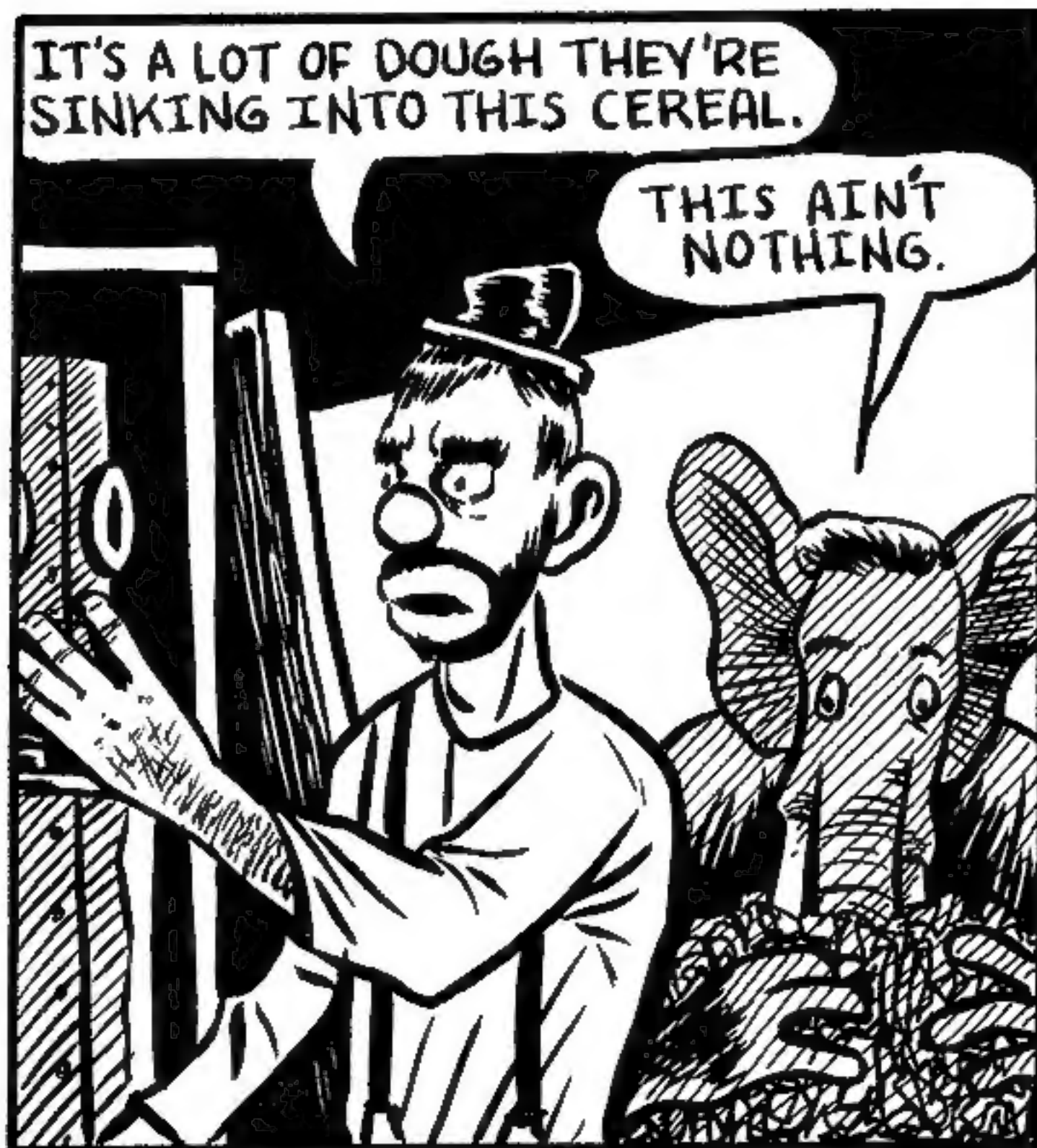
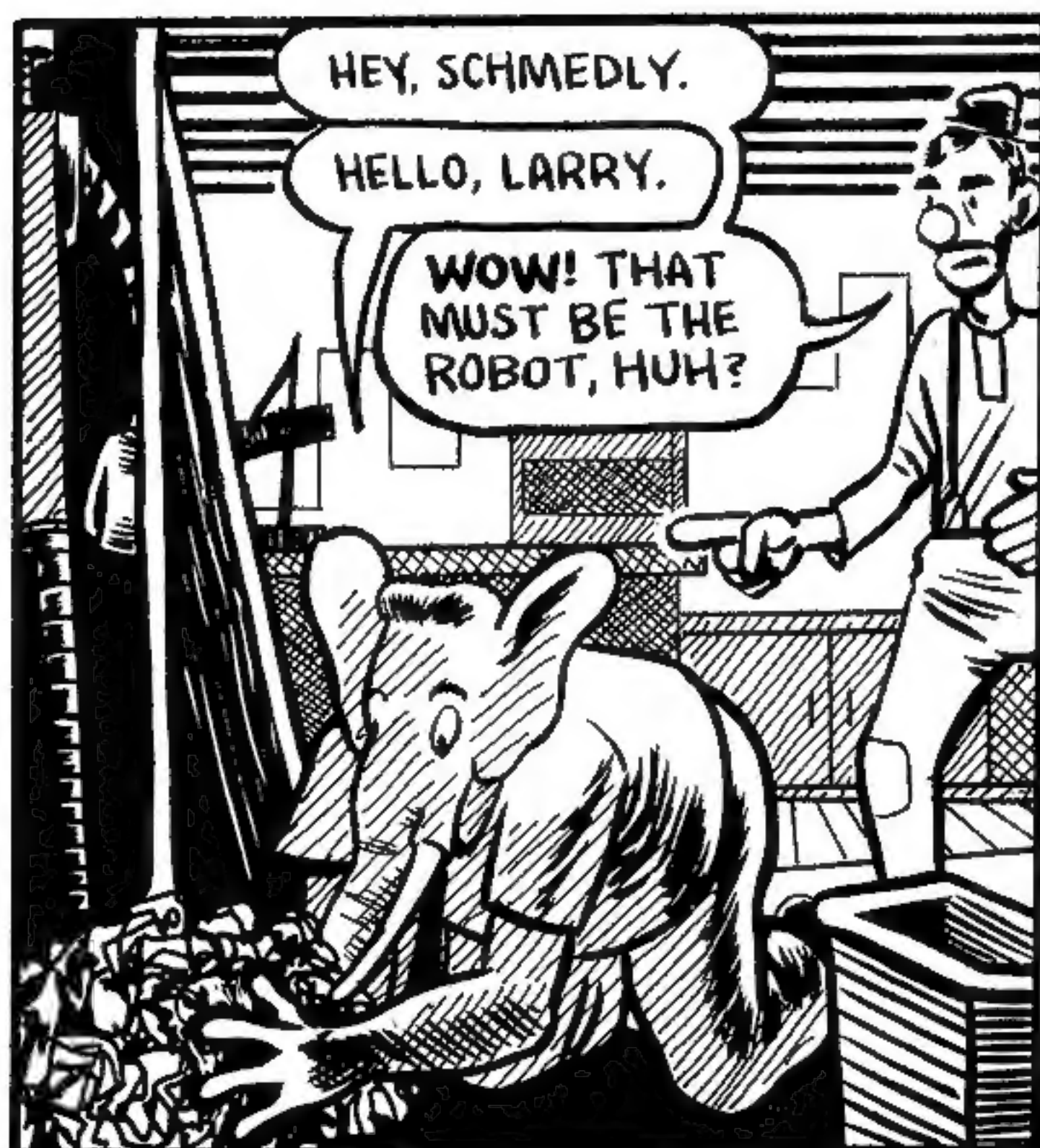
CHAPTER SIX: End of the Line

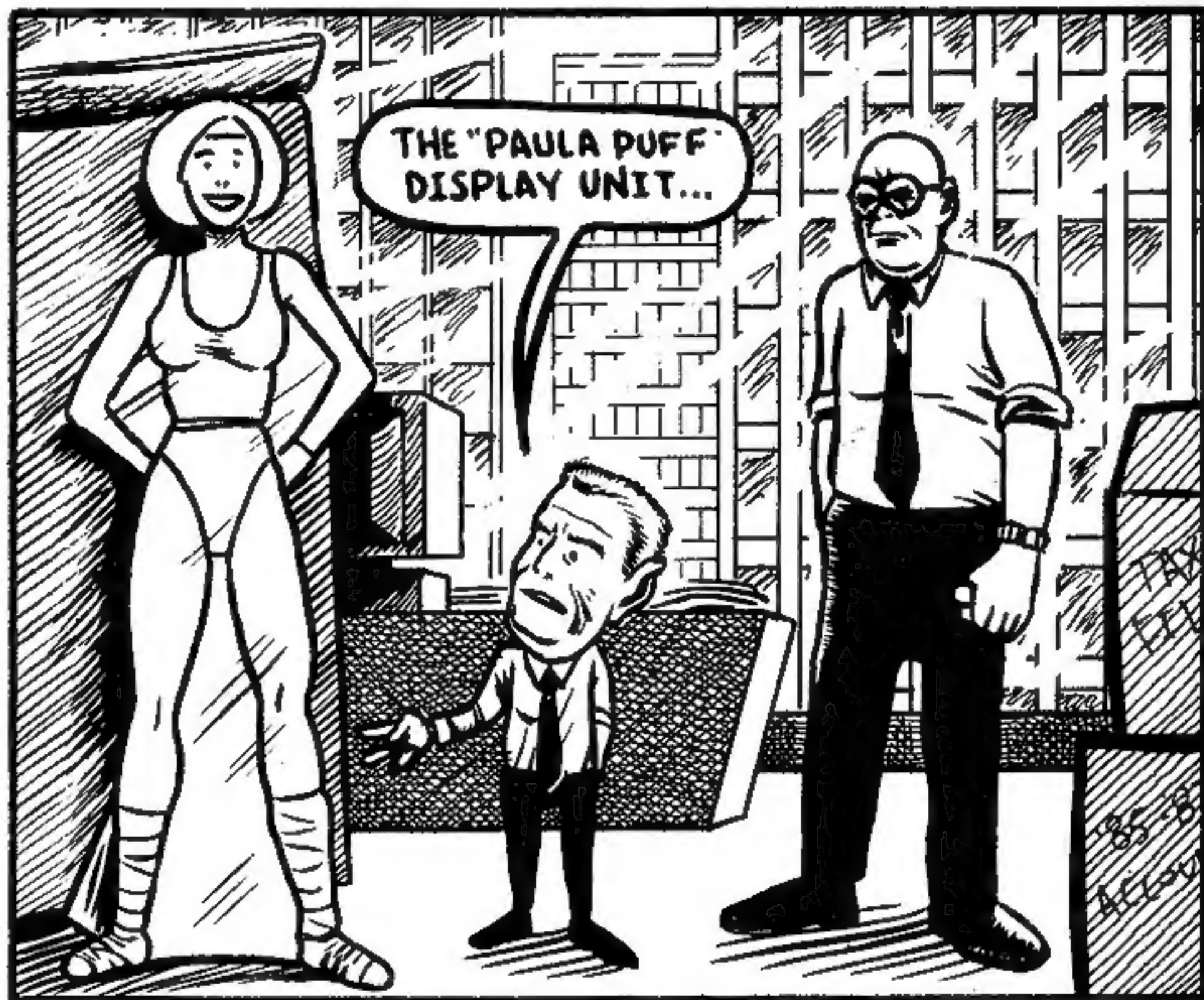
The story thus far: In the early 1950s, Kelcog is a young growing breakfast food company eager to expand their market. Strangely, none of Kelcog's salespeople can sell Mason County, a large rural county two hundred miles north of the city. All of Mason County's stores seem content to carry only one brand, Corn Cereal, produced locally by a scarecrow. Snip the Elf, Vice President of Kelcog, dispatches his Sales Manager, Schmedly, to Mason County to arrange a meeting with the scarecrow for purposes yet unknown.

Meanwhile, in the present, the scarecrow is still of great concern to many. Schmedly, now an old drunk, is haunted by both the scarecrow and the grip of a past that has yet to release him. Carbunkle, a self-employed cereal marketer, looks to him as a symbol of hope and redemption as he tries to come to terms with his role in the deaths of several of his cereal-mascot clients who were led into an early grave by a lifestyle gone awry. Snip, current president of Kelcog, is leery of Carbunkle's search for the scarecrow. In a surprise move, Snip offers Carbunkle a job at Kelcog.









I HEAR POSTAL RATES MAY RISE - IF SO, WE WANT TO MAIL OUT THE TRIAL-SIZE BOXES THAT MUCH SOONER.



THE MEETING WITH THE PAULA PUFF PEOPLE IS AT 4:00. BE IN MY OFFICE AT 3:00.



HELLO, SNIP

GENTLEMAN.

HEY, BOSS.



CARBUNKLE, WELCOME ABOARD!

HEY, BURT, ARCHIE...



SO THIS IS THE NEW OFFICE-YOU PLAN ON STAYING OR ARE ALL THESE BOXES SOME SORT OF ELABORATE FILING SYSTEM?



BEEN SO BUSY HAVEN'T HAD TIME TO UNPACK.

BURT AND I ARE GOING FOR LUNCH-WHY DON'T YOU JOIN US?



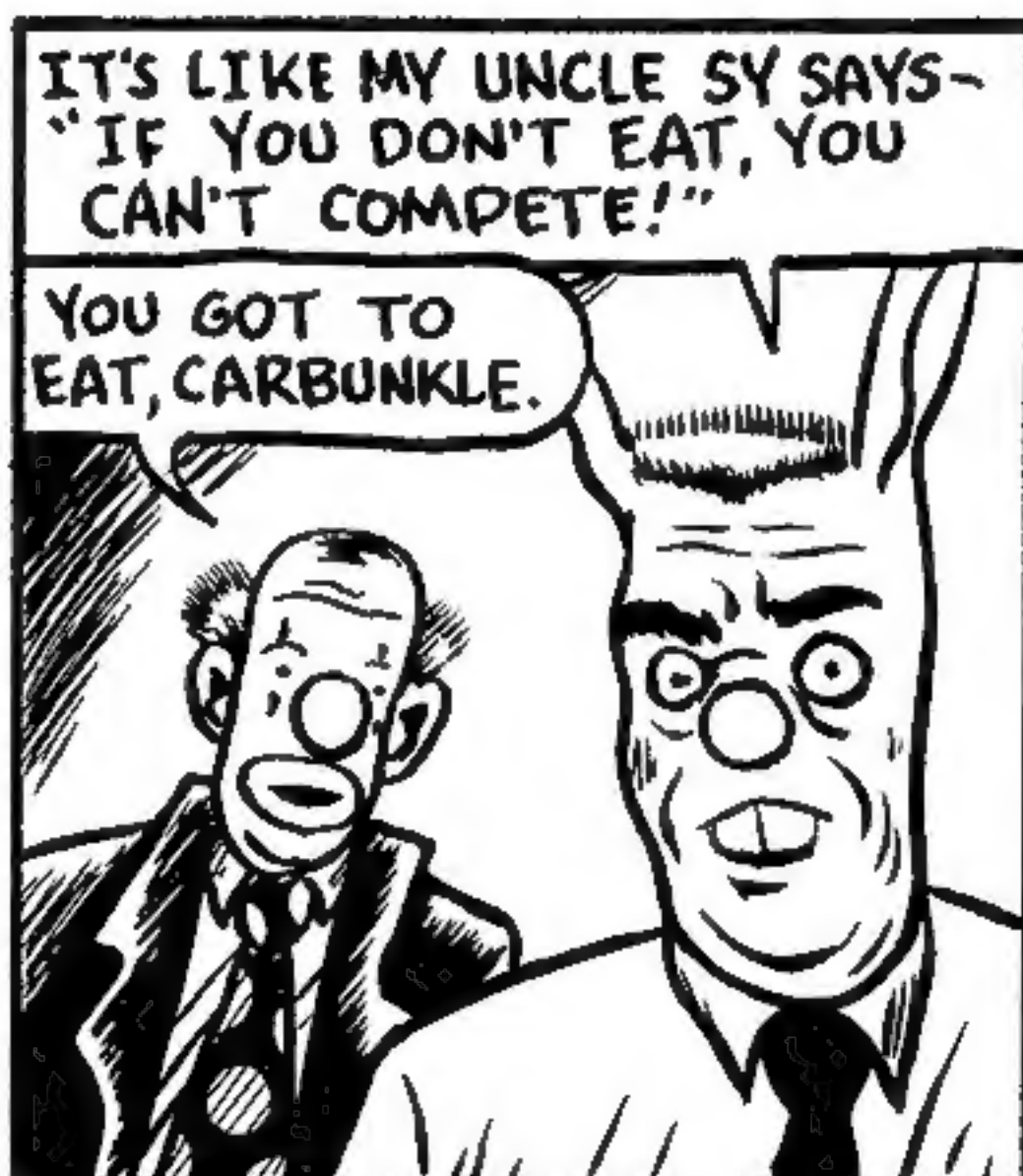
SORRY GUYS- TOO MUCH WORK TO DO...

NONSENSE!



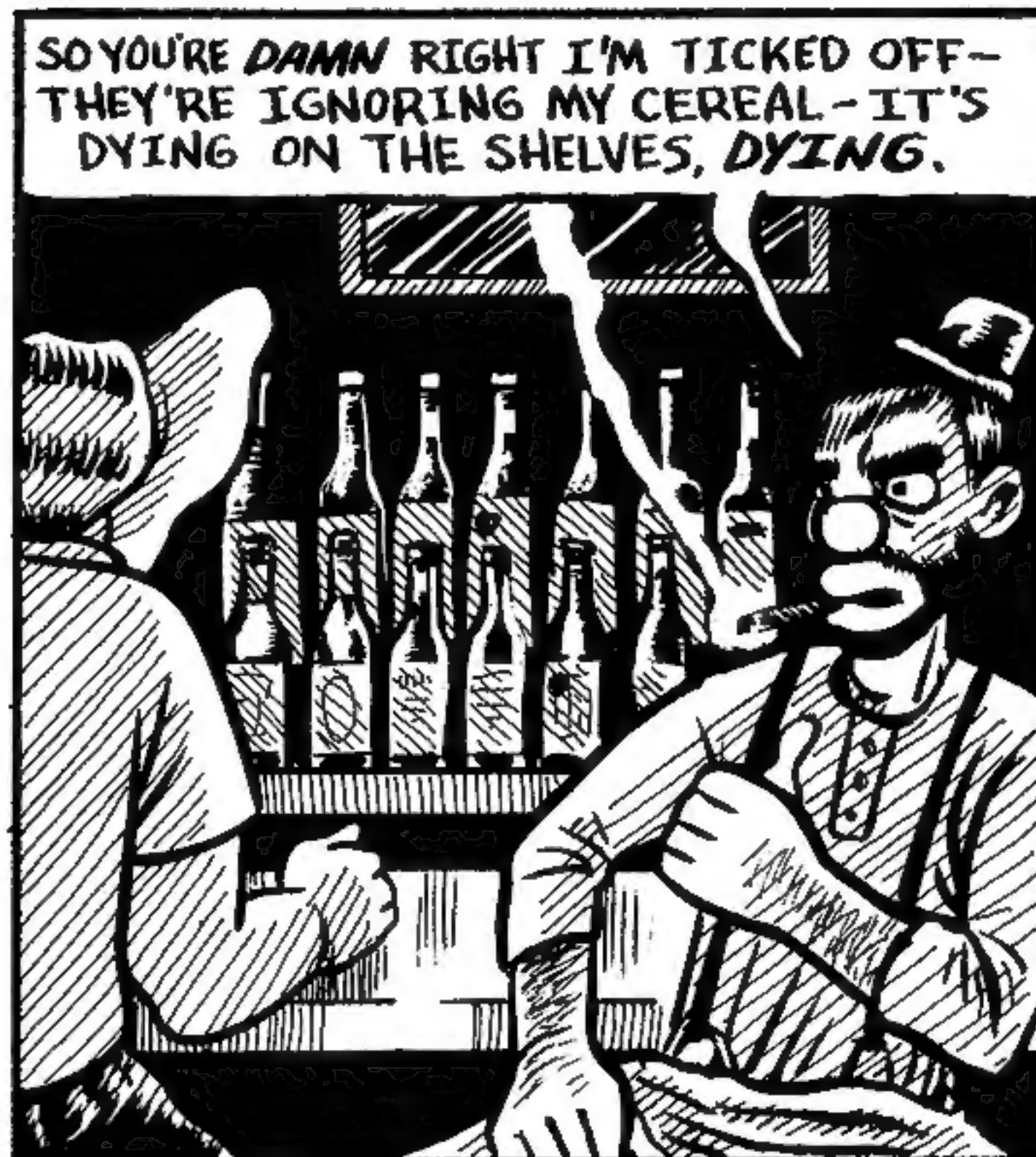
IT'S LIKE MY UNCLE SY SAYS- "IF YOU DON'T EAT, YOU CAN'T COMPETE!"

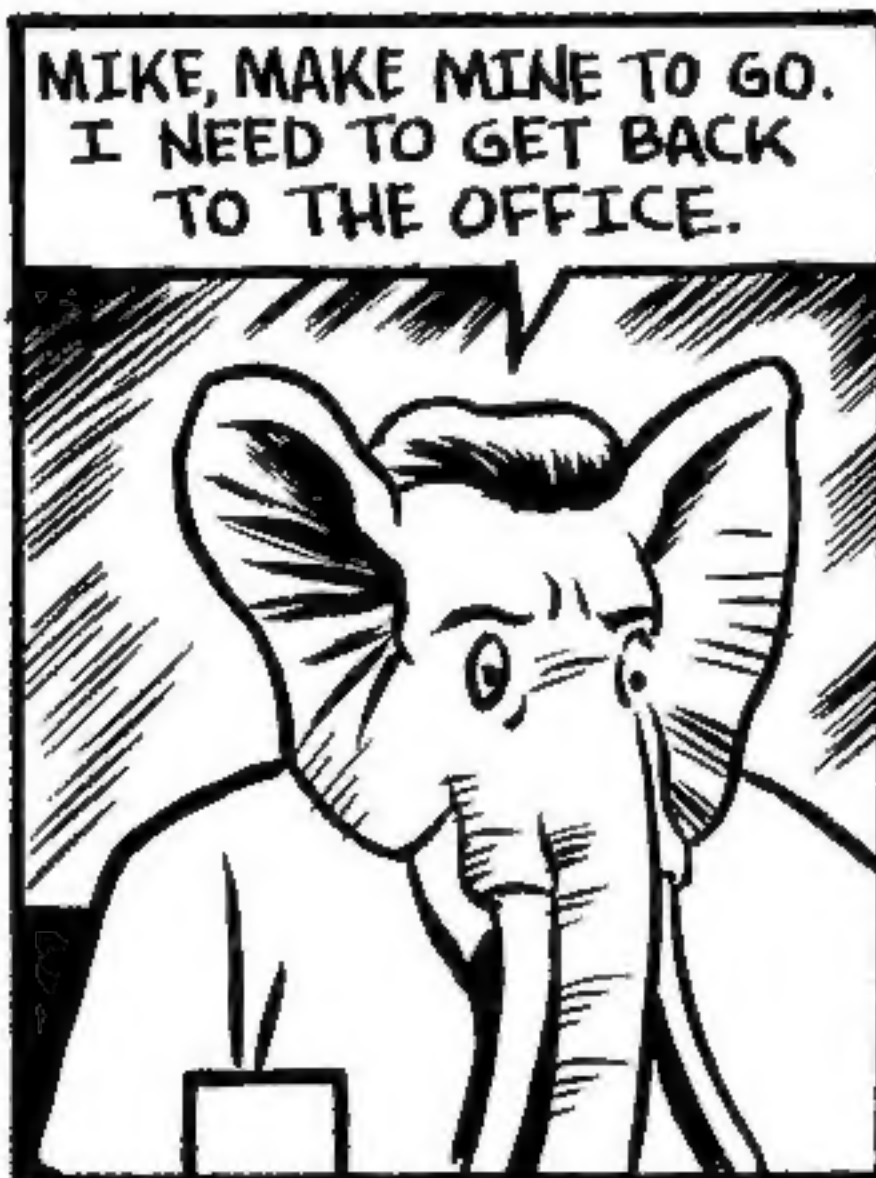
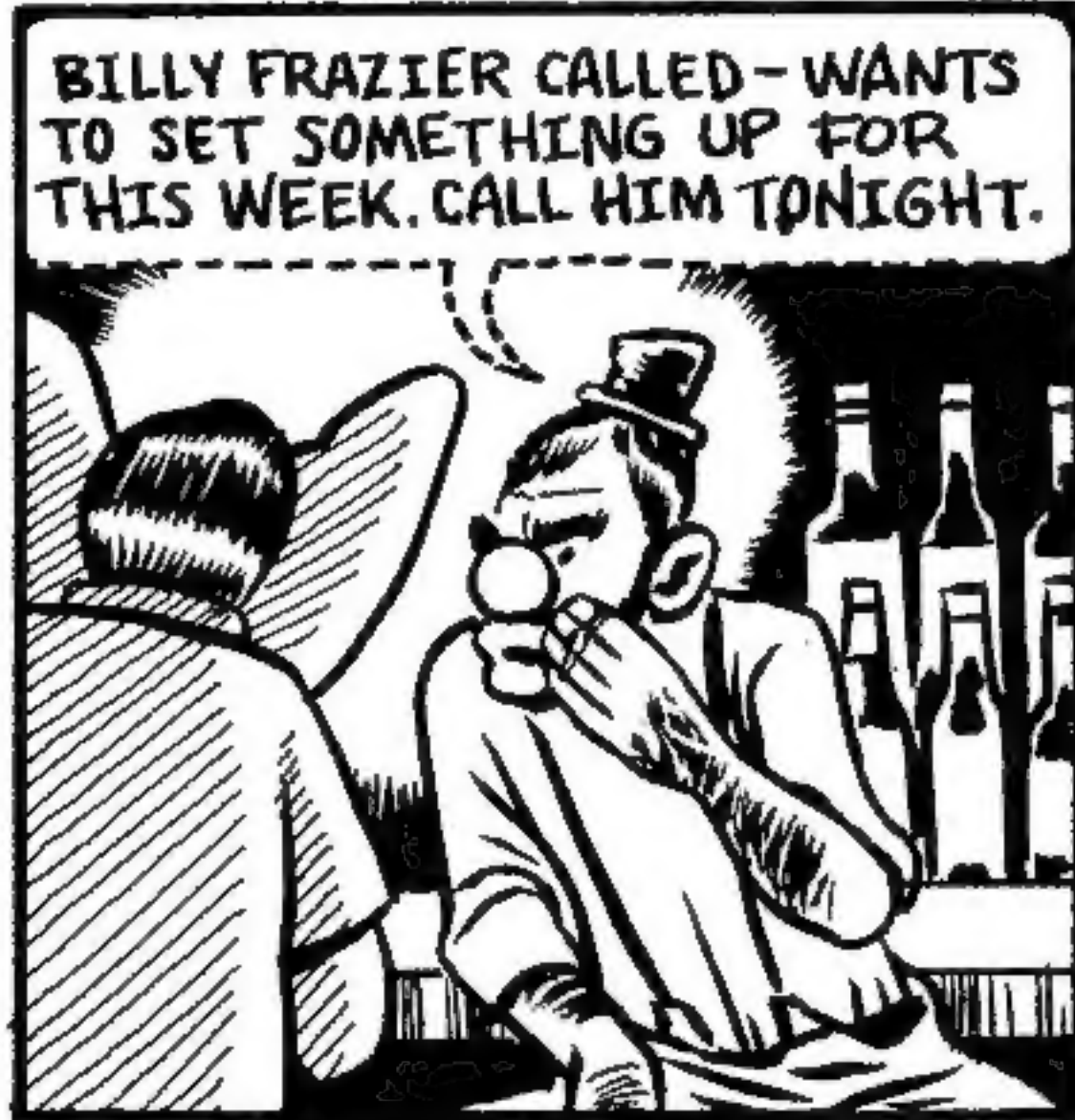
YOU GOT TO EAT, CARBUNKLE.

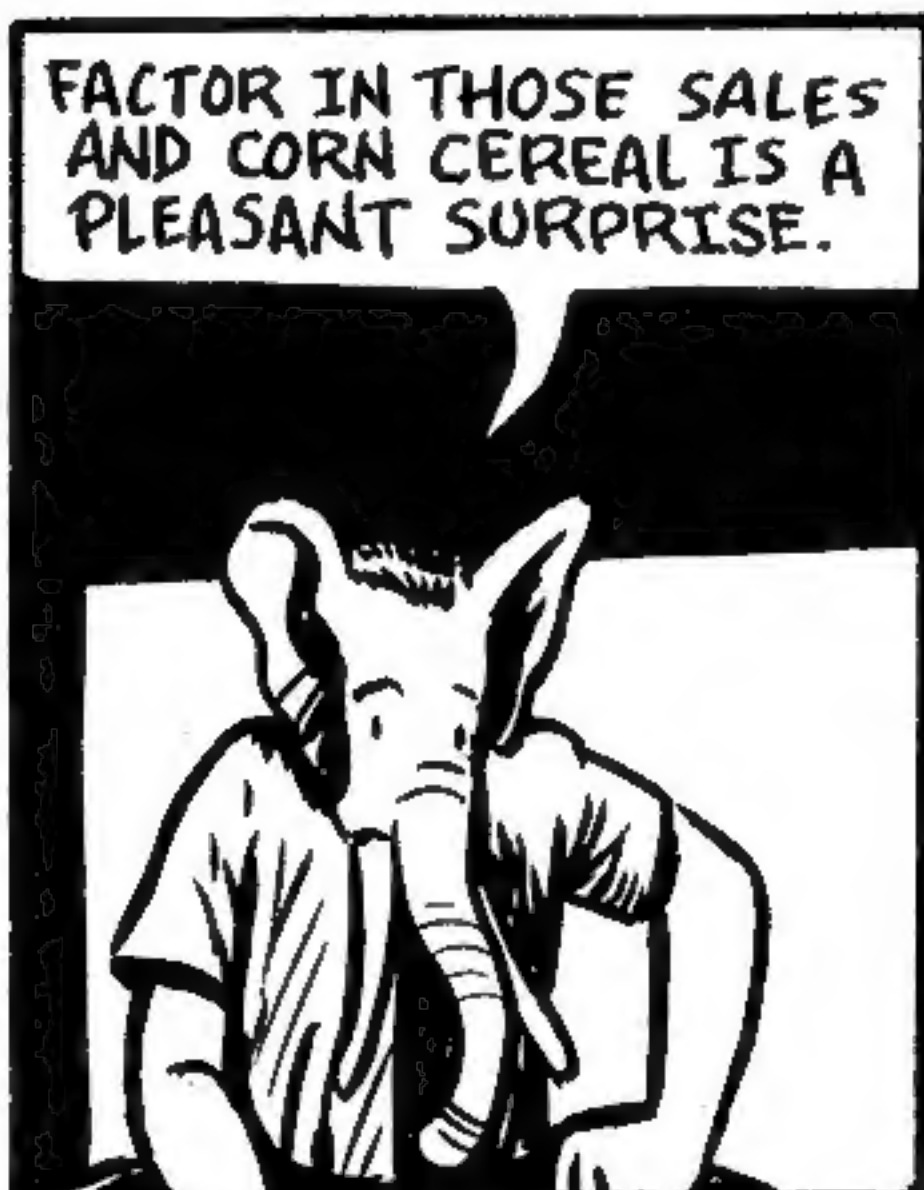


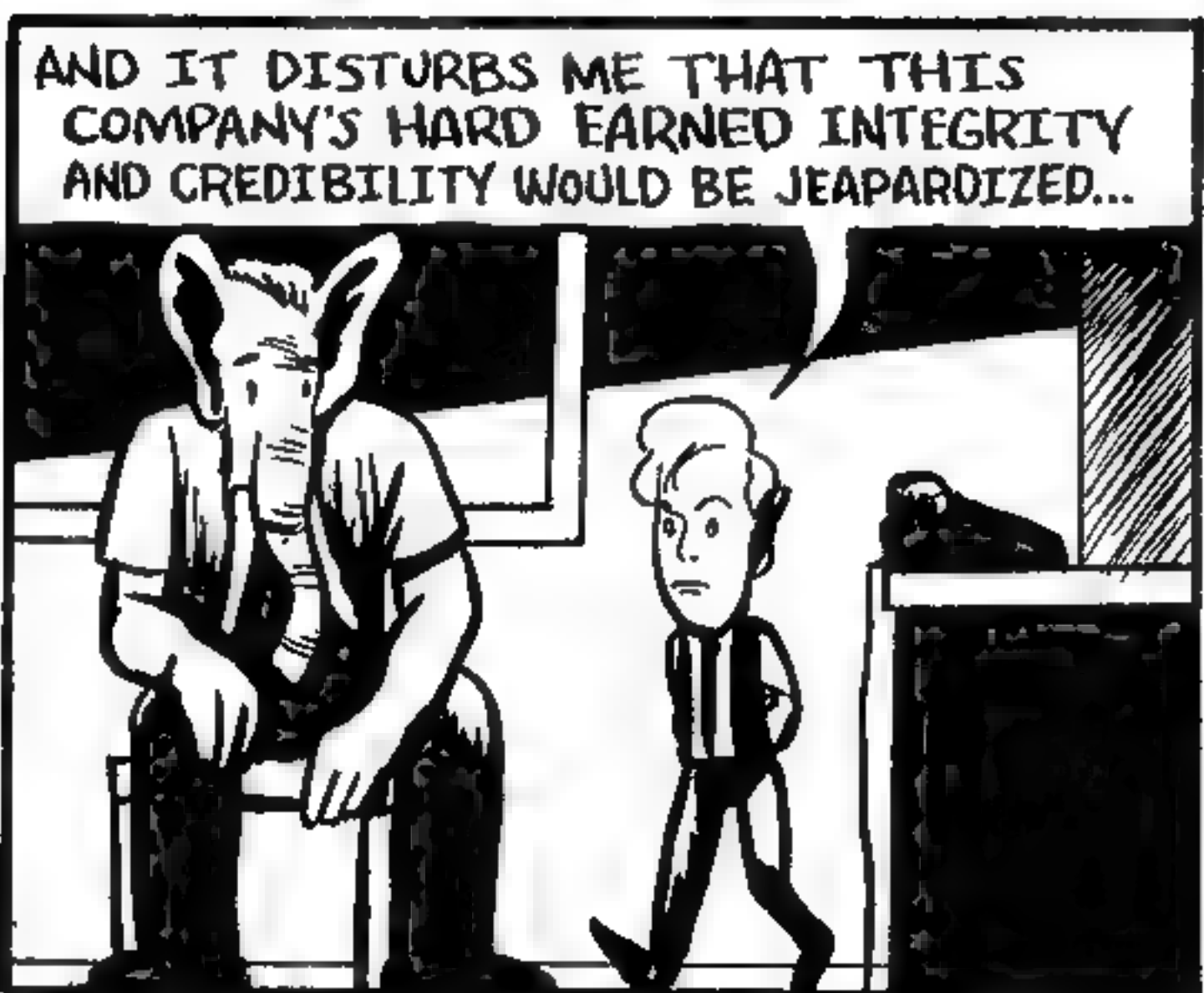
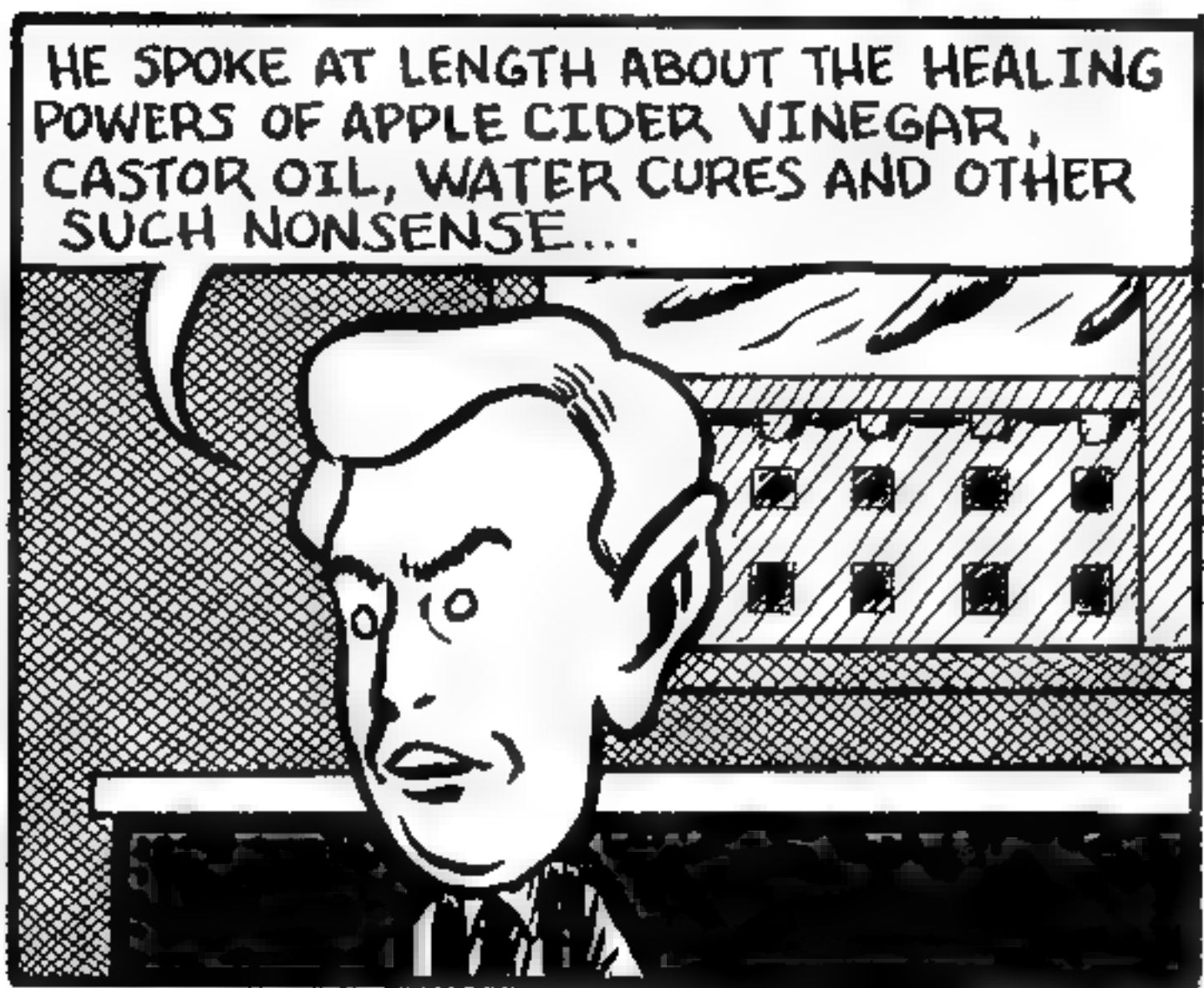
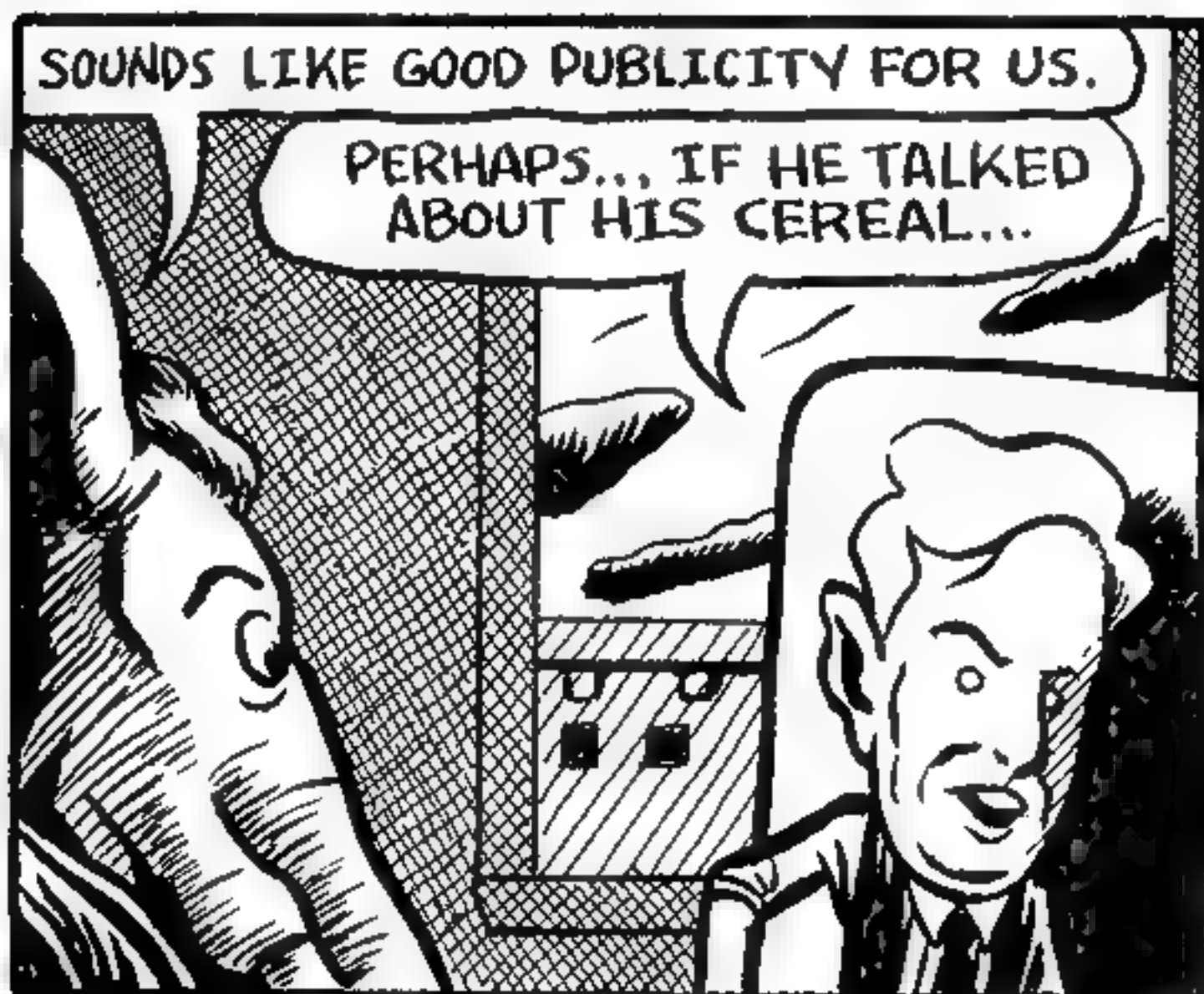
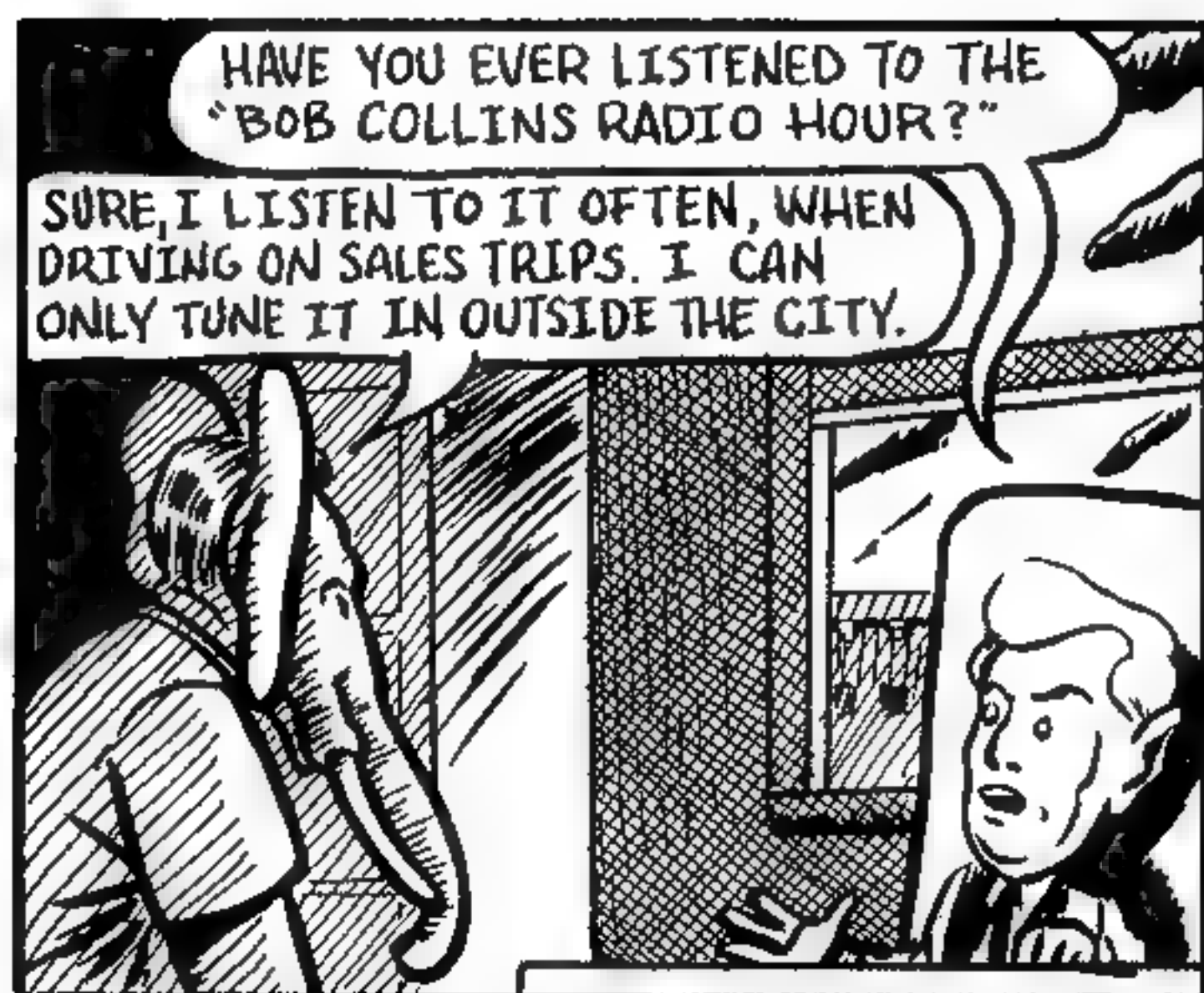
WELL... A QUICK BITE WON'T KILL ME. BUT LET'S HURRY.







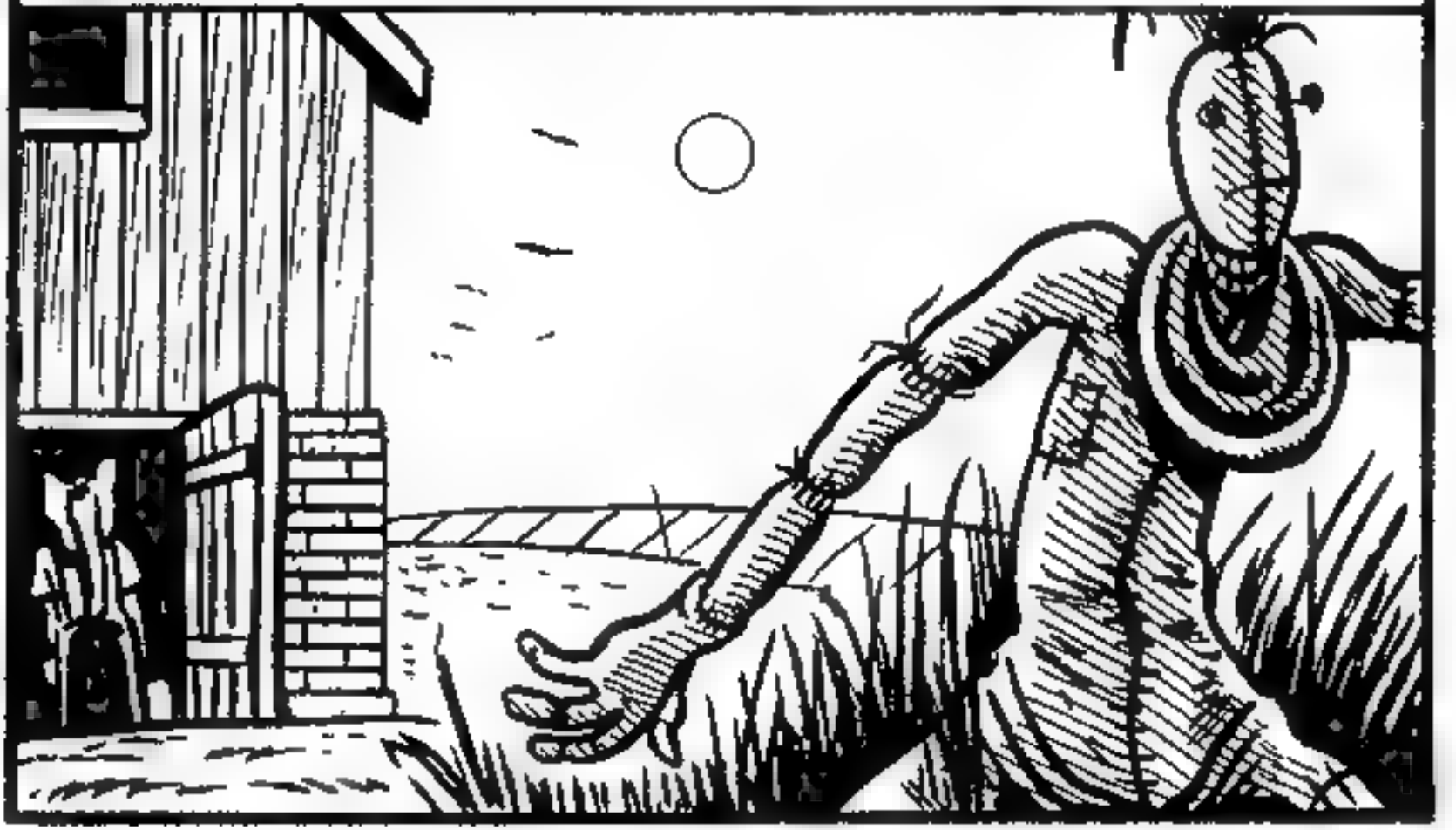




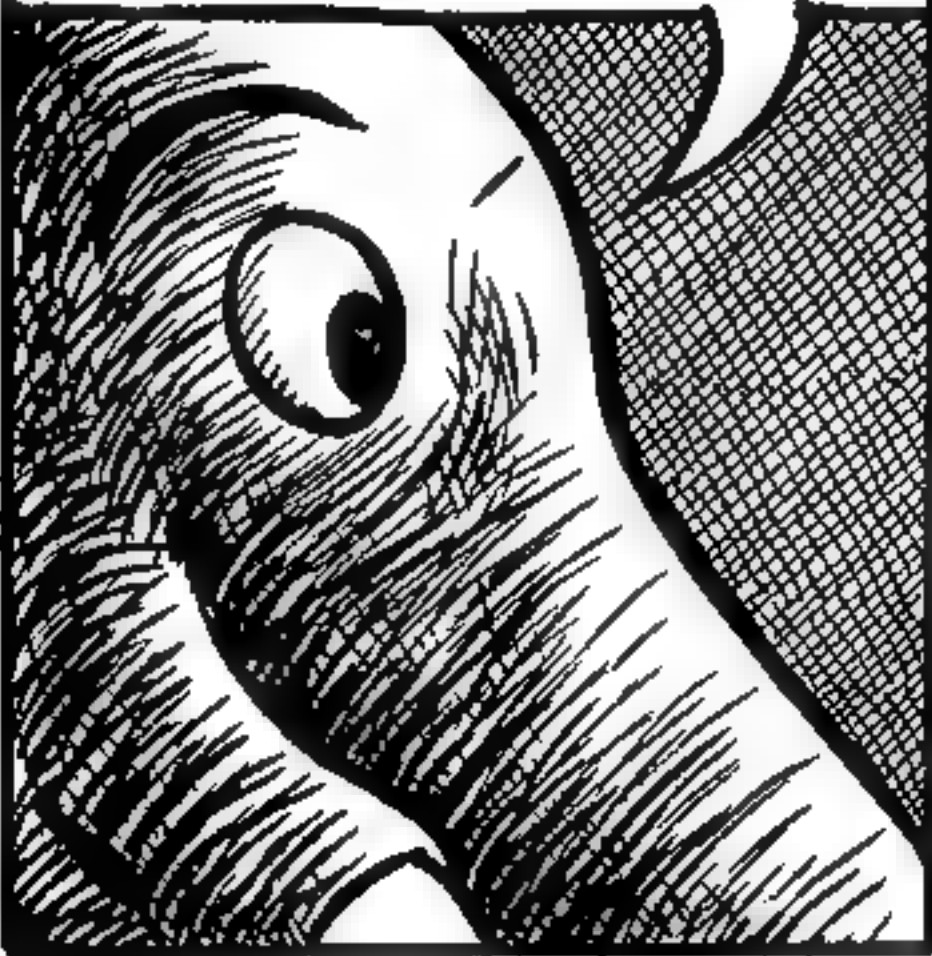
TELL ME, SCHMEDLY, WHAT HAVE YOUR INTERACTIONS WITH THE SCARECROW BEEN LIKE?



'SINCE I DROVE UP TO HIS FARM LAST SPRING TO SET UP THAT FIRST MEETING WITH HIM, I HAVEN'T HAD MUCH OF ANY CONTACT.'

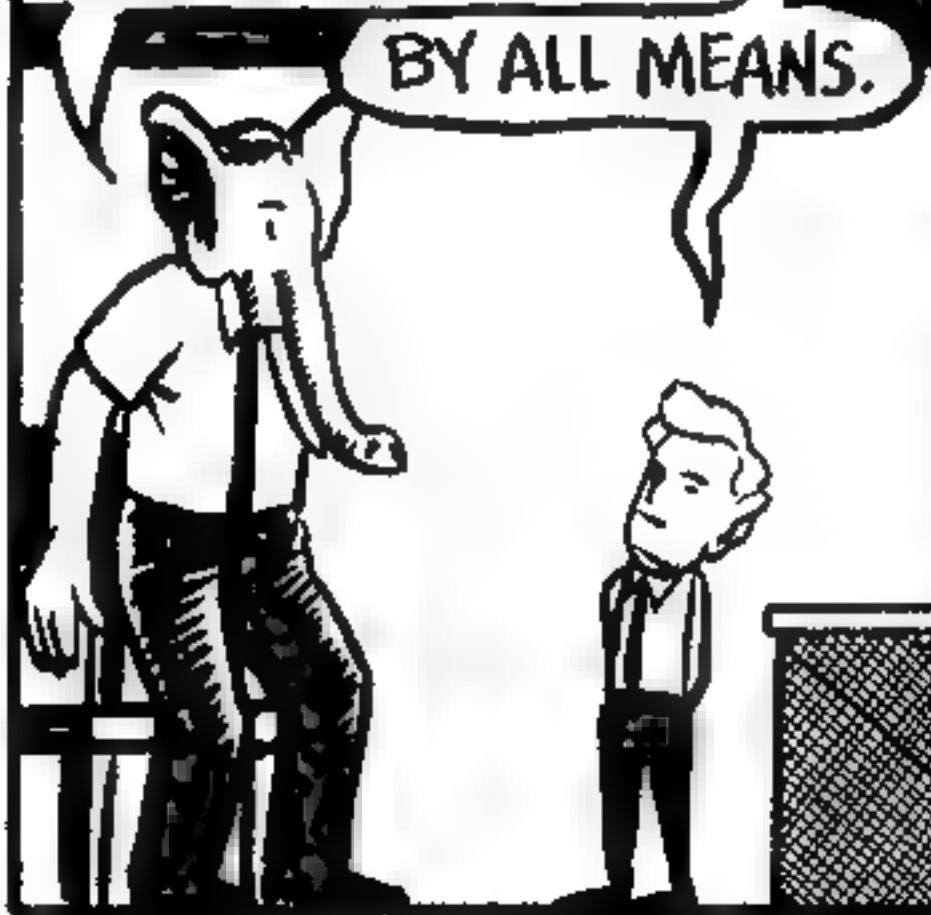


TALK TO CHARLIE KESSLER, I'VE SEEN THEM TOGETHER A FEW TIMES.



VERY WELL, I WILL DO THAT. IF THAT'S ALL, I'LL GET BACK TO WORK.

BY ALL MEANS.

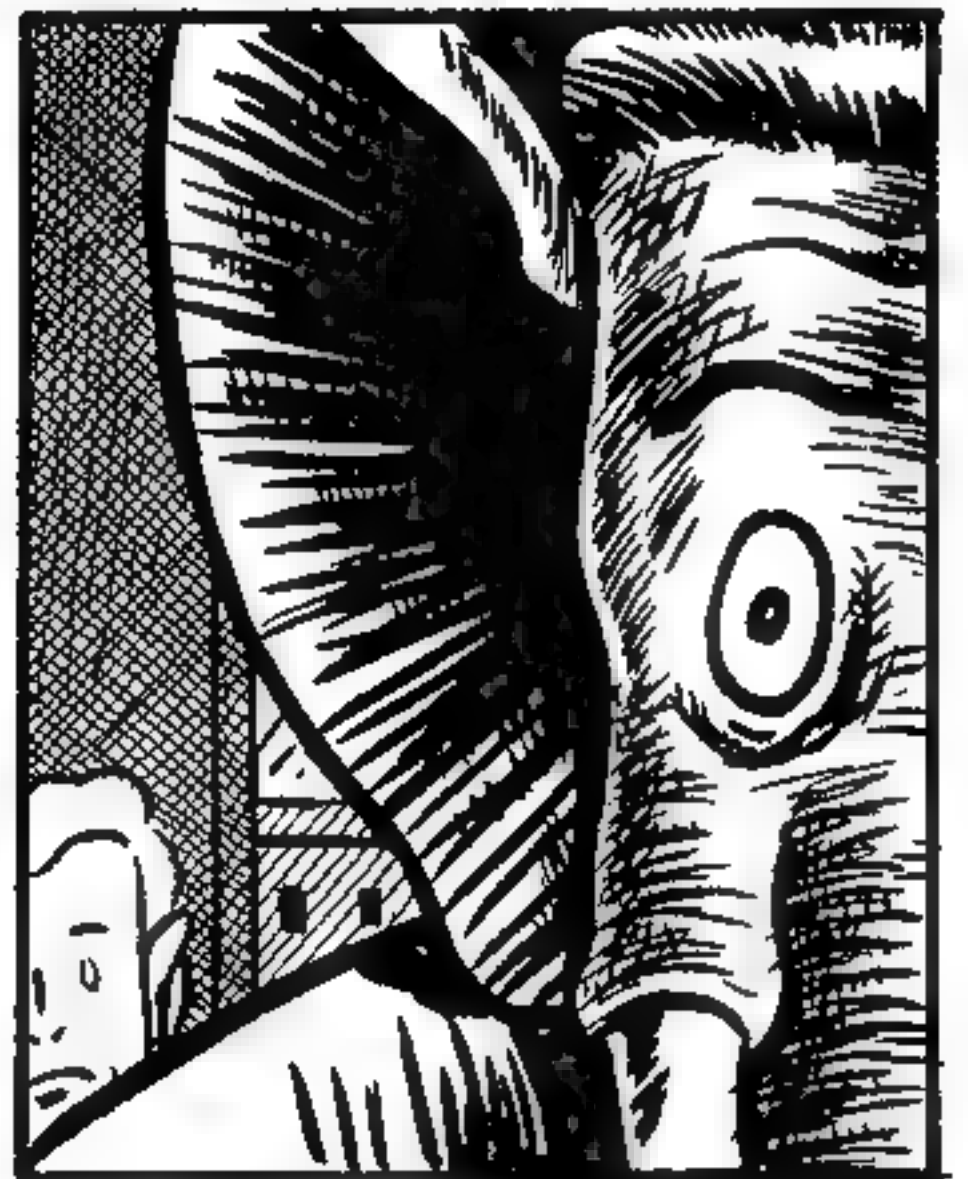


OH, SCHMEDLY...

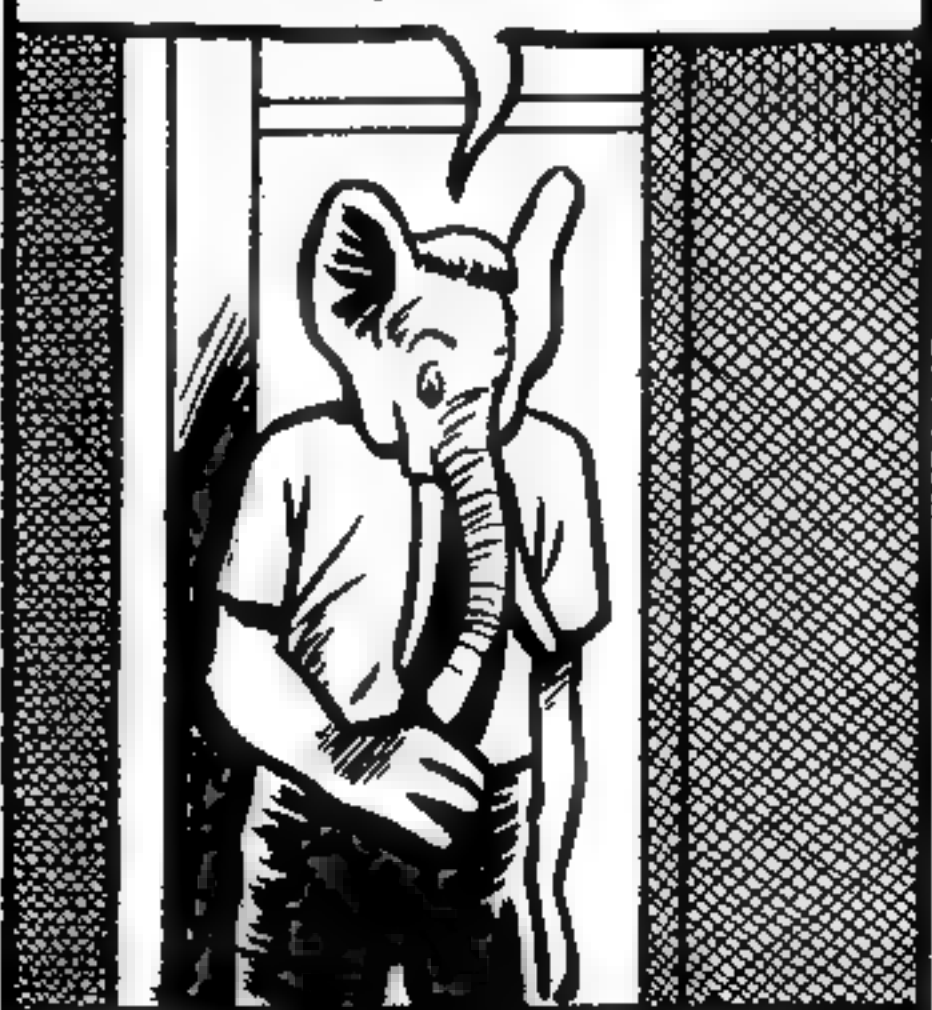
ONE MORE THING...



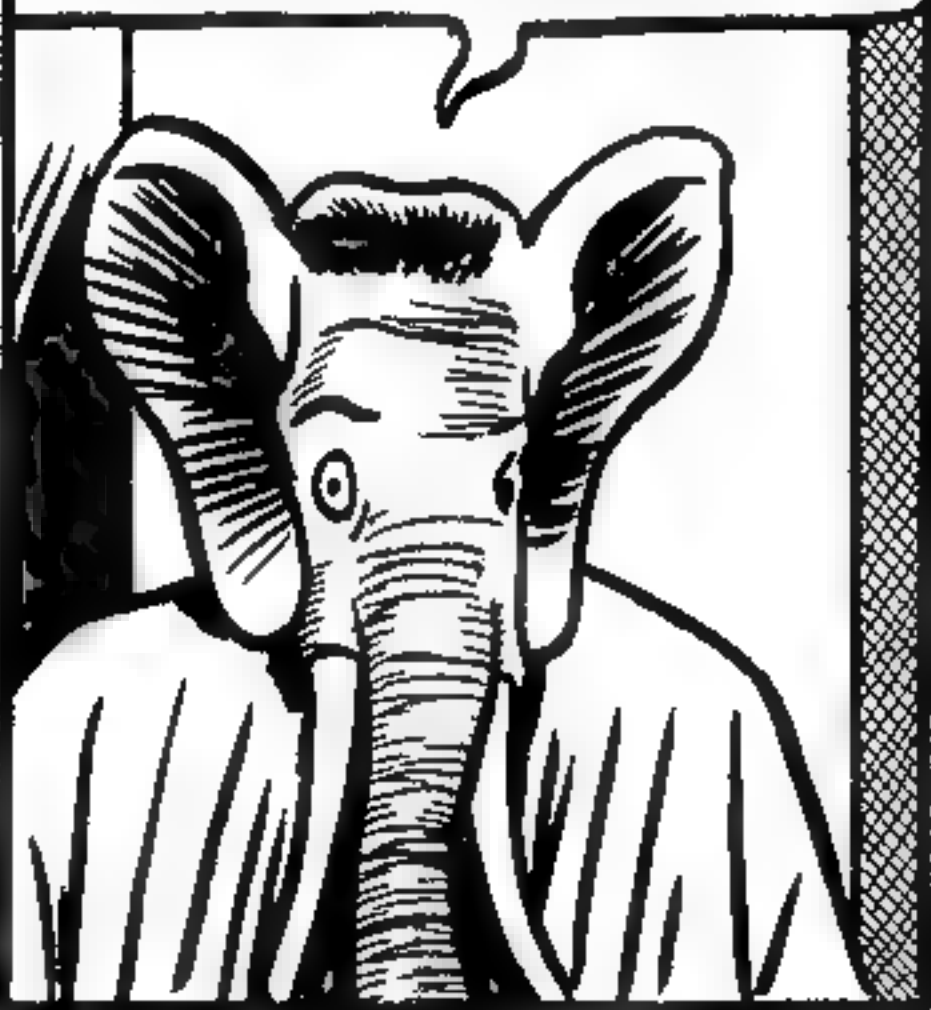
HAVE YOU DISCOVERED THE SOURCE OF THE LEAK IN THE WAREHOUSE?



THE SKYLIGHT, GOT A TAR GUN AND SEALED IT MYSELF.

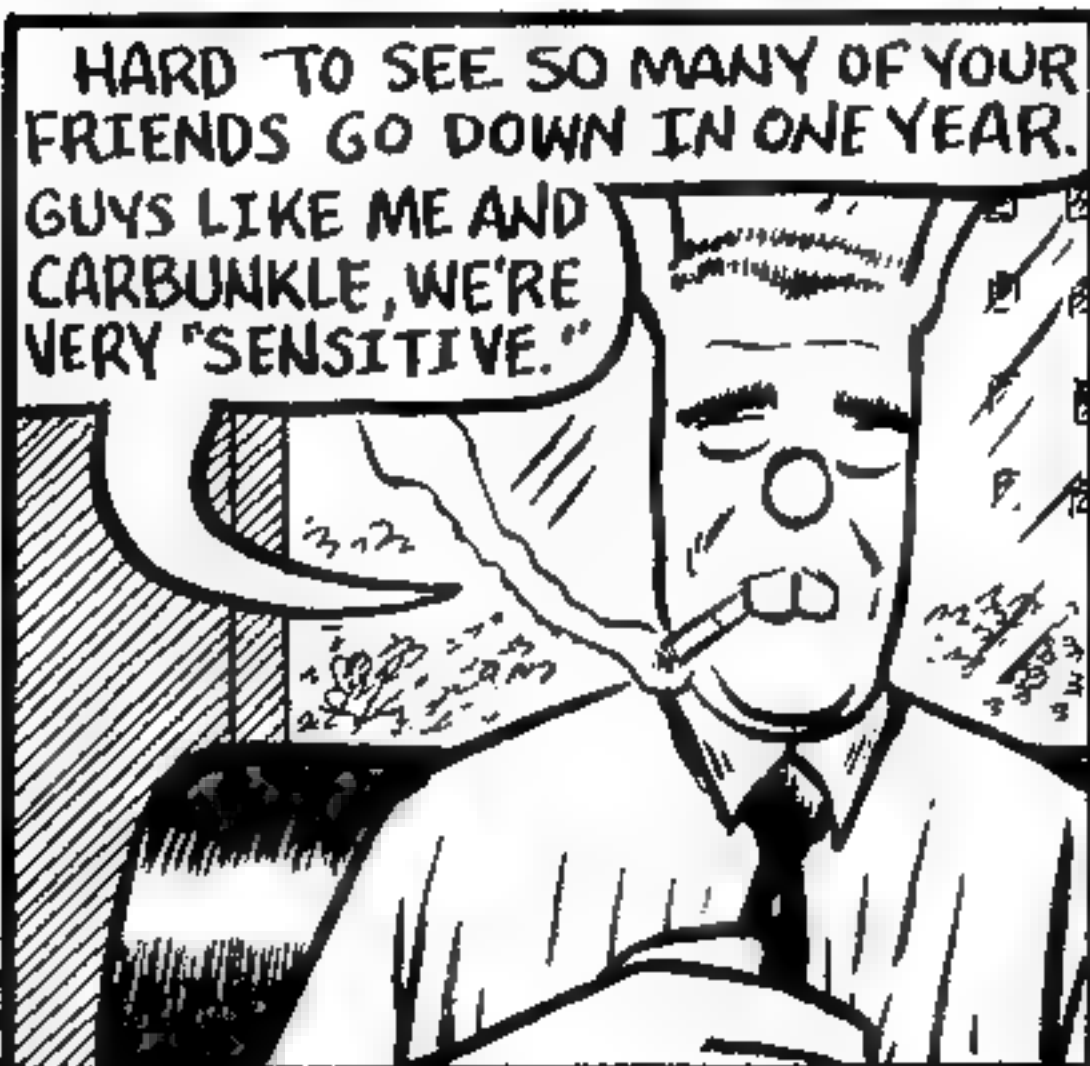
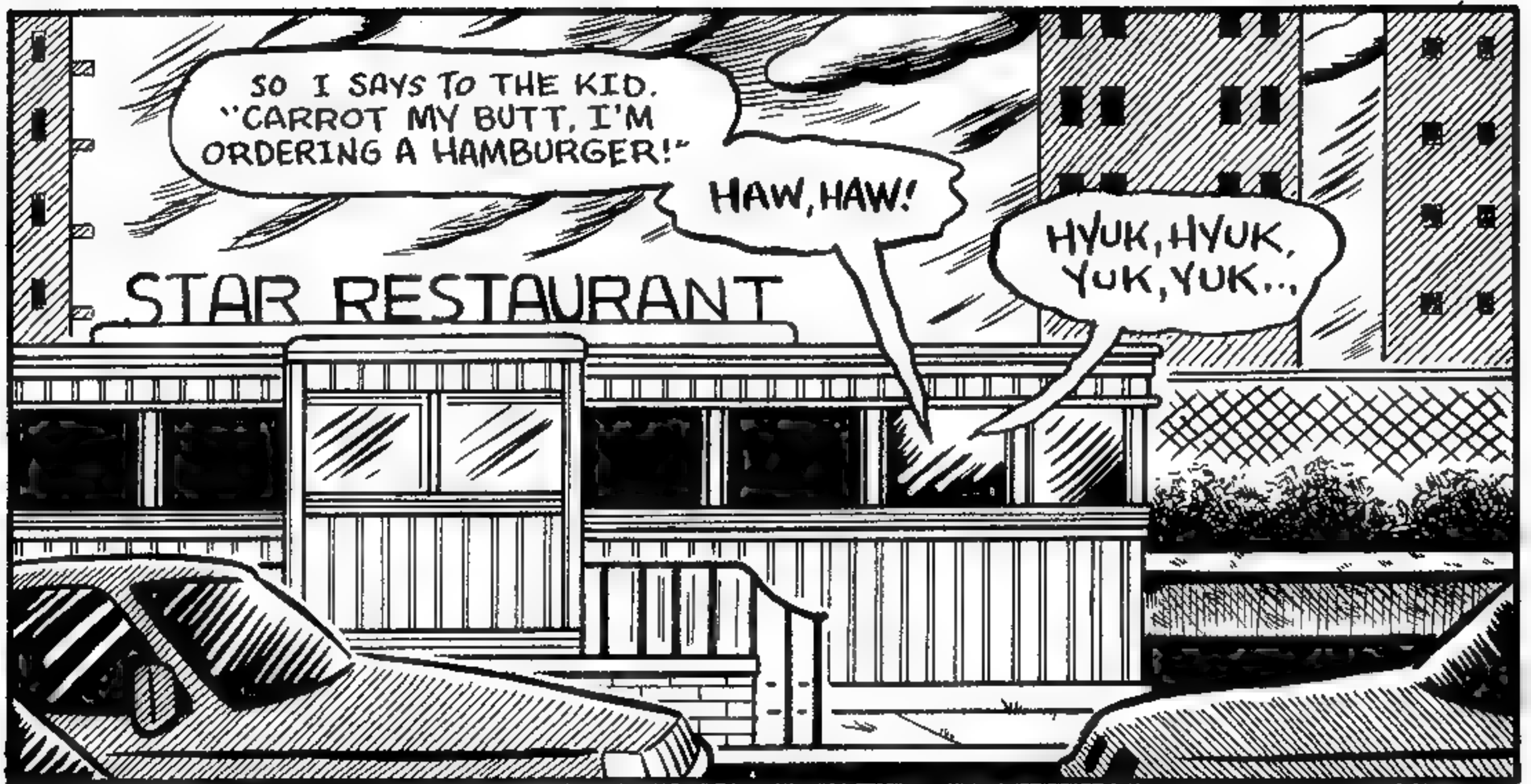


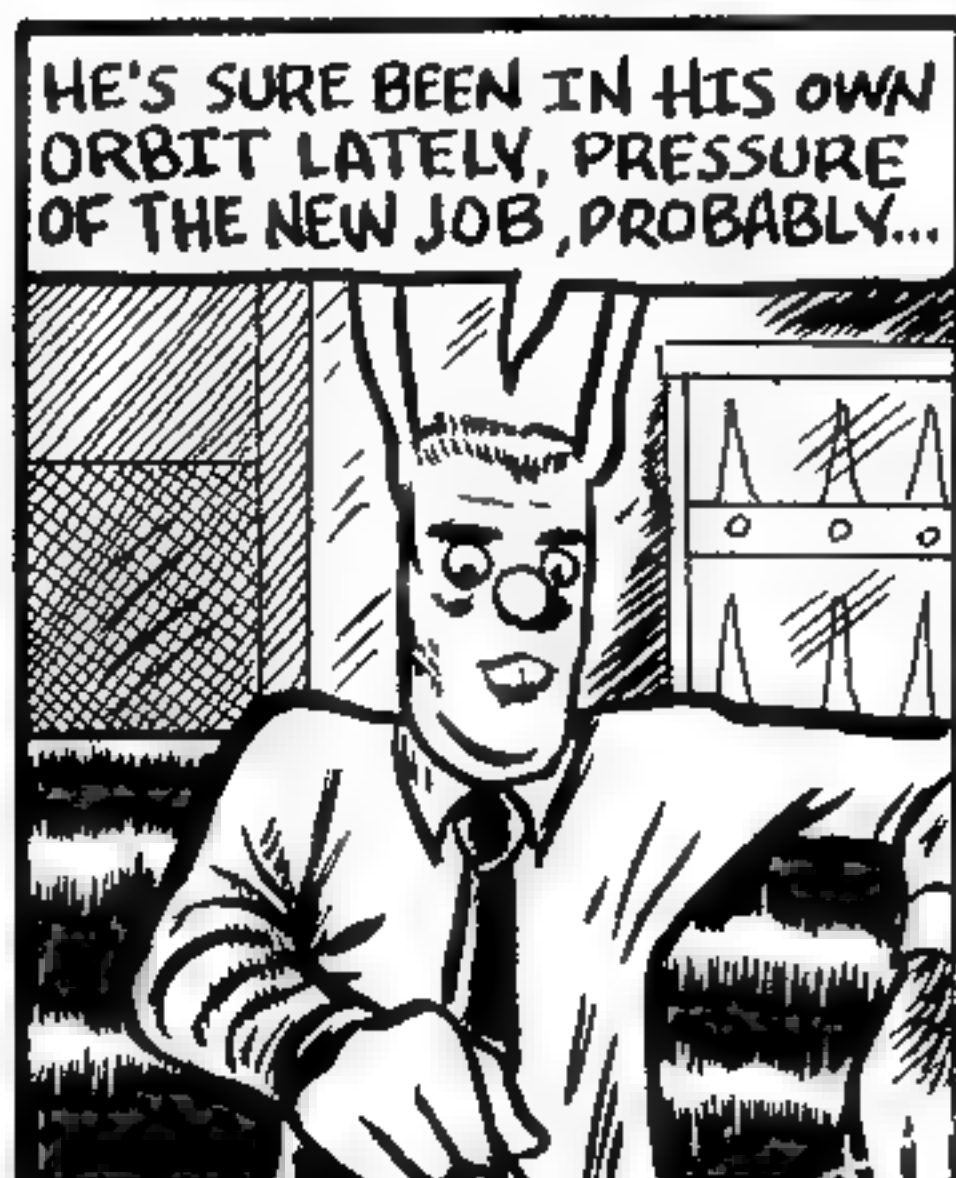
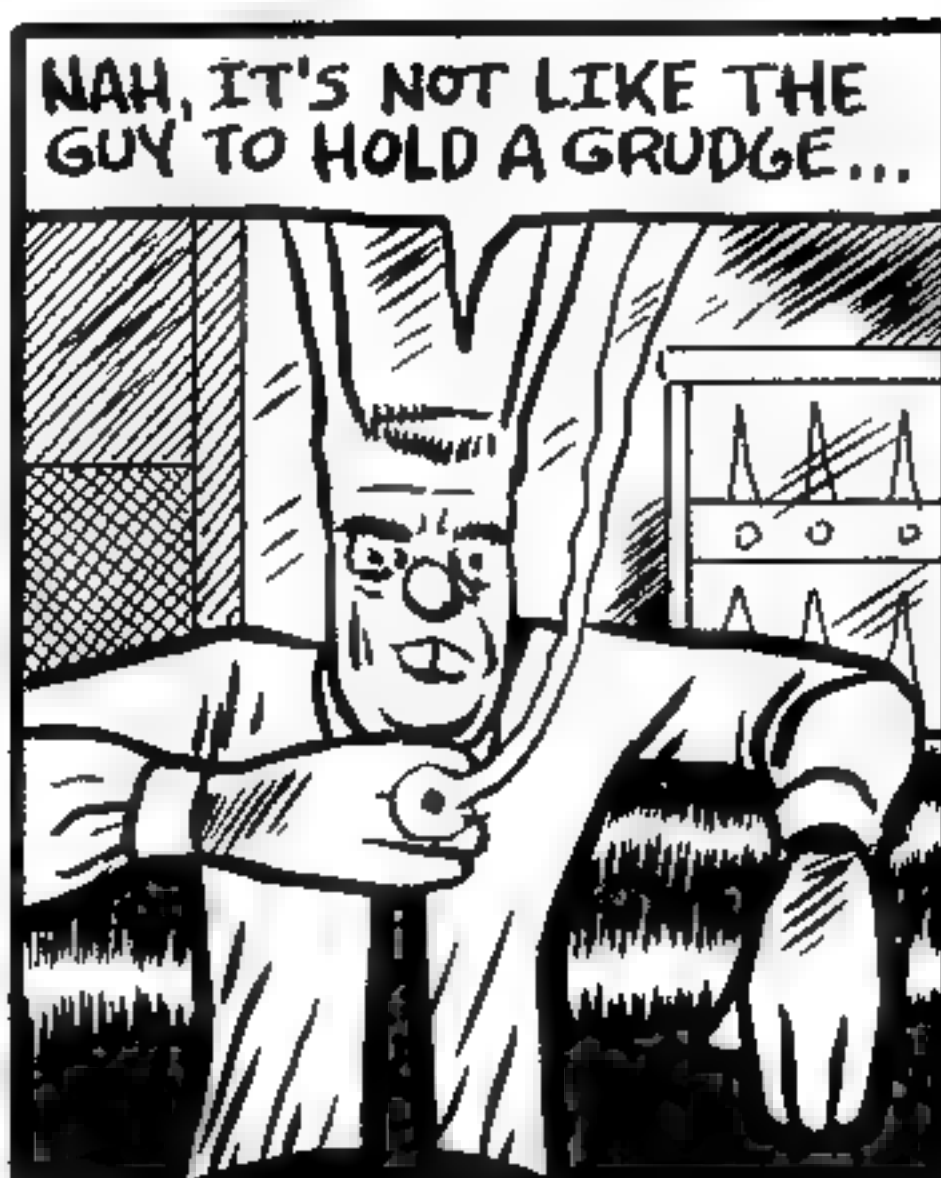
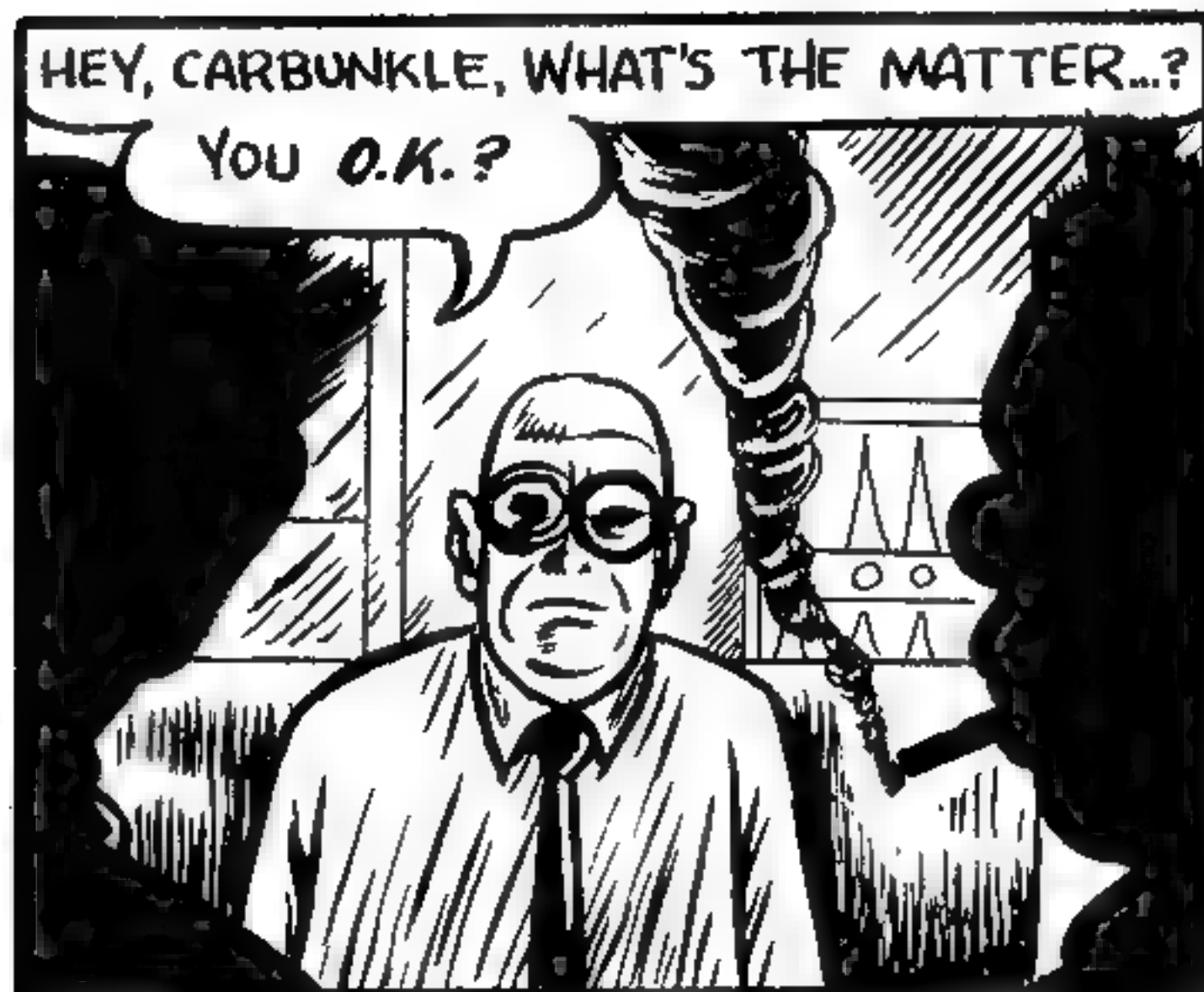
HATE LOSING INVENTORY TO WATER DAMAGE.



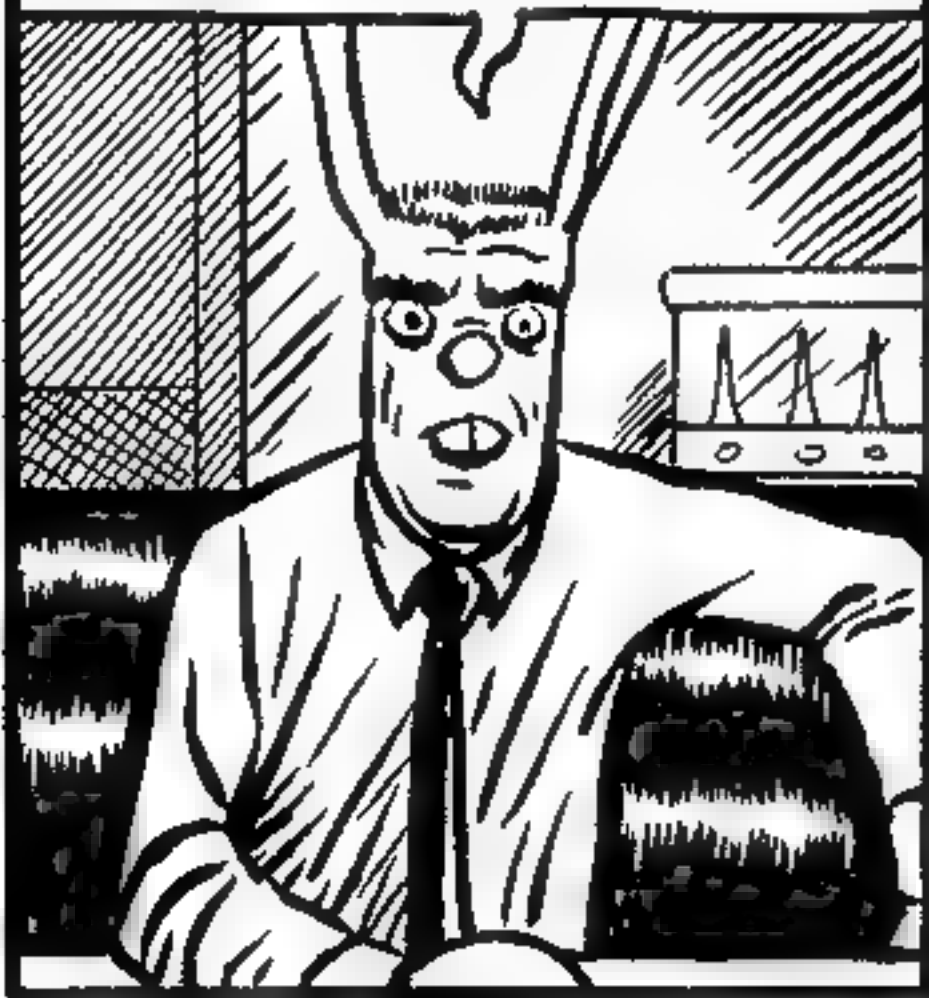
LOSING INVENTORY FOR ANY REASON IS DISTURBING.







SURE IS HARD TO FIGURE
THAT GUY OUT, AIN'T IT?



I MEAN, HE LANDS A GREAT
JOB (HE'S MAKING SIX FIG-
URES IF HE'S MAKING A CENT)



AND HE'S WALKING AROUND
LIKE A SPACE CADET-
GET WITH IT, MAN!



YOU THINK HE'S STILL
UPSET ABOUT SHIRLAND?



FIRST CORNELIUS, THEN
PAULIE, THEN DOUGIE,
NOW SHIRLAND...



I MEAN, THE GUY'S GOT
TO BE HURTING!



MAYBE HE FEELS HE'S THE
TOUCH-OF-DEATH OR SOMETHING.



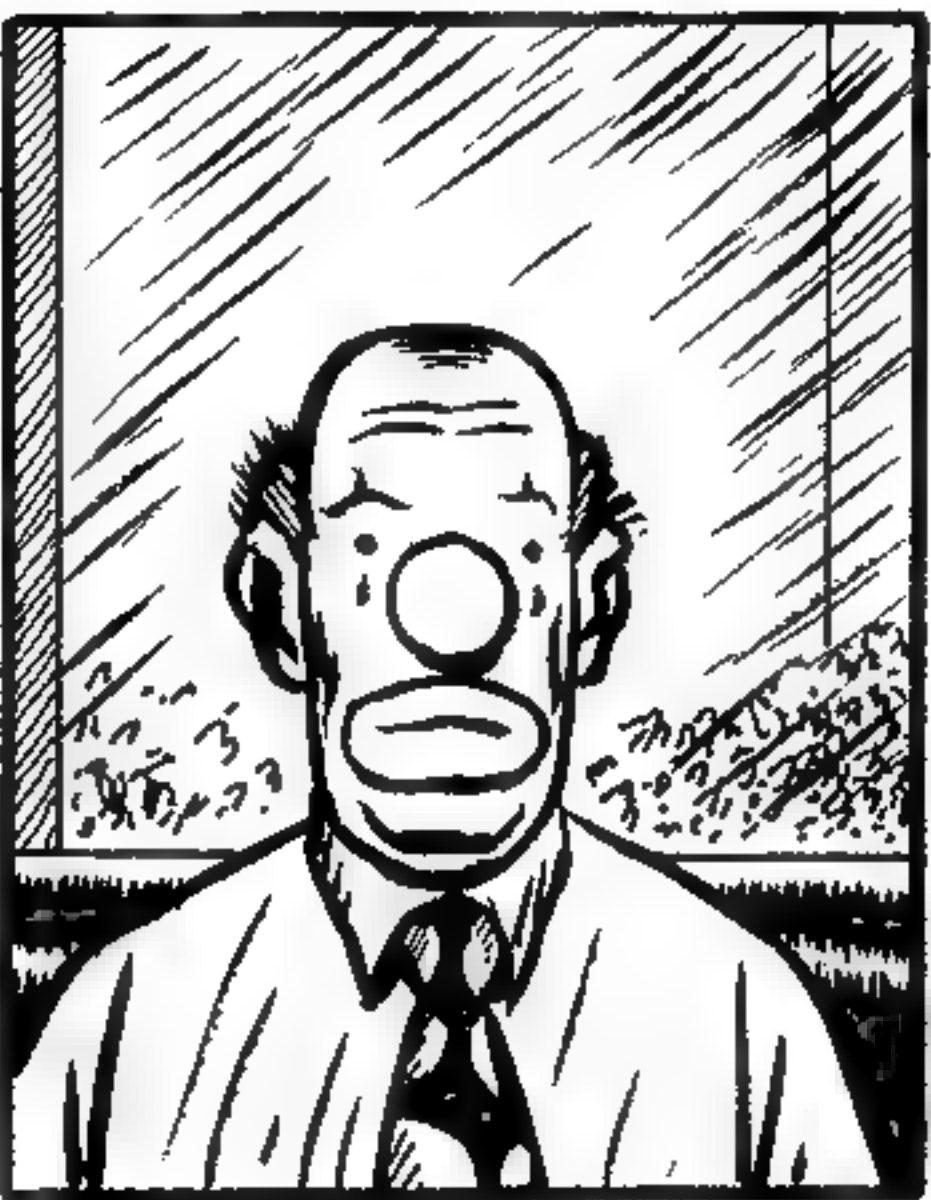
JESUS, ARCH, THAT'S A GOOD
POINT - MAYBE WE'RE THE
ONES THAT SHOULD WORRY...



NOW THAT CARBUNKLE'S
WORKING FOR KELCOG...
HAW, HAW, HAW...



YEA, MAYBE... HEH...



JEEZ, WHEN'S THE FOOD
GOING TO GET HERE?





DID I EVER TELL YOU ABOUT THE TIME THAT UNCLE MILTY HIMSELF CAME UP TO ME AFTER A SHOW IN THE CATSKILLS AND SAID TO ME- "TIMING! YOU GOT GREAT TIMING!"

CHARLIE...

I'D LIKE TO GET TO THE PURPOSE OF MY VISIT...

I'M CONCERNED ABOUT OUR NEW EMPLOYEE-THE SCARECROW WHO I UNDERSTAND YOU ARE FRIENDLY WITH.

SURE, SURE WE'RE PALS-WHAT'S THE MATTER, HE IN TROUBLE?
NOT EXACTLY.

I'M CONCERNED THAT HE HAS MORE ON HIS MIND THAN SELLING CEREAL-THAT HE MAY HAVE AN AGENDA!

I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT AN AGENDA, NO SIR! WE'RE JUST FRIENDLY ACQUAINTANCES, THAT'S ALL.

TO BE HONEST, I DON'T KNOW HIM ALL THAT WELL...

HE IS A BIT ODD, BUT I'VE BEEN AROUND PERFORMERS MY WHOLE LIFE...

YOU EXPECT FOLKS TO BE A BIT ECCENTRIC IN THIS FIELD...

BUT I'LL TELL YOU SOMETHING ABOUT THIS SCARECROW...

SELLING CEREAL ISN'T HIS ONLY TALENT...

I GUESS BEFORE HE CAME TO WORK FOR KELCOG HE WAS A DOCTOR OF SORTS... WHAT DO YOU CALL THEM... A CHIROPRACTICER?

DID HE TELL YOU THAT?



NO, BUT I GOT THIS TRICK BACK, SEE...

LAST TIME IT WENT OUT I COULD BARELY WALK...



WELL, HE SAW ME ALL HOBBOLED OVER AND ASKED ME IF HE COULD LEND A HAND - WHAT DID I HAVE TO LOSE, RIGHT?



SO HE LIES ME DOWN AND STARTS TO GENTLY PUSH ON MY HIPS...



WHEN I STOOD UP MY BACK NEVER FELT BETTER!



SURE HE TALKS A BIT WEIRD, BUT LIKE I SAID, THAT'S PAR-FOR-THE-COURSE IN THIS LINE OF WORK.



SPECIFICALLY, WHAT "WEIRD" THINGS DOES HE SAY?



OH, I DON'T KNOW, STUFF ABOUT FOLK REMEDIES AND THE 'PATTERNS OF THE LORD.'



DON'T KNOW WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT HALF THE TIME, BUT SO WHAT?

HE'S COLORFUL - I LIKE THAT!



HE ALSO PUTS OUT SOME KIND OF NEWSLETTER...

HE DOES?



YEA, HE'S GOT A PRINTING PRESS
ON HIS FARM—WHERE HE
USED TO MAKE HIS CEREAL...



HE GAVE ME A COPY BECAUSE
IT HAD AN ARTICLE IN IT
ABOUT PREVENTING BAD BACKS.



DO YOU HAVE
A COPY HERE?

I THINK SO.
HOLD ON...



AH, HERE IT IS...



AND HE WRITES THIS
ALL HIMSELF?

I ASSUME SO.
I DON'T KNOW,
I DIDN'T READ IT.



MAY I BORROW THIS
FOR A FEW DAYS...

SURE, SURE, KEEP IT,
IT'S YOURS!

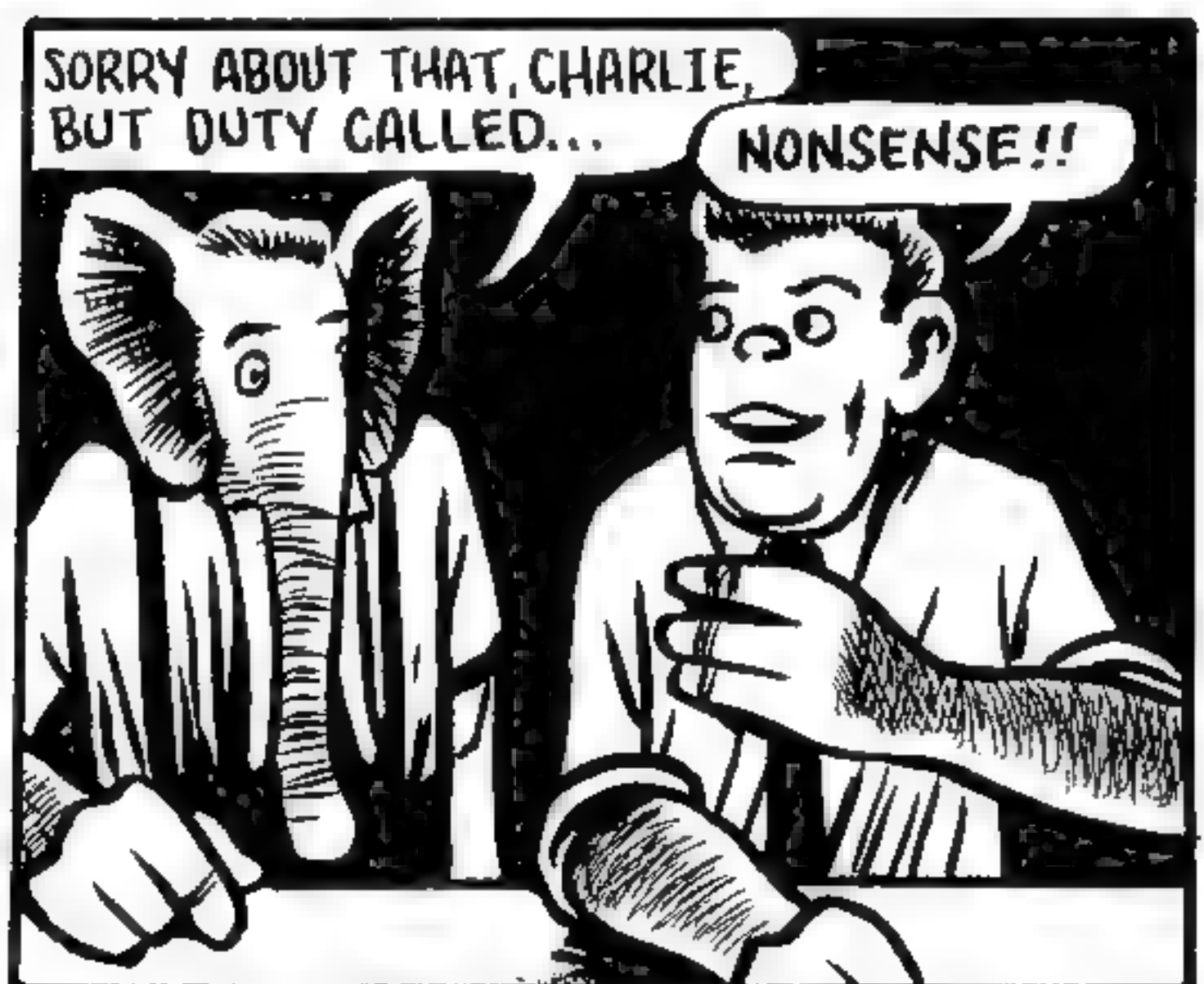
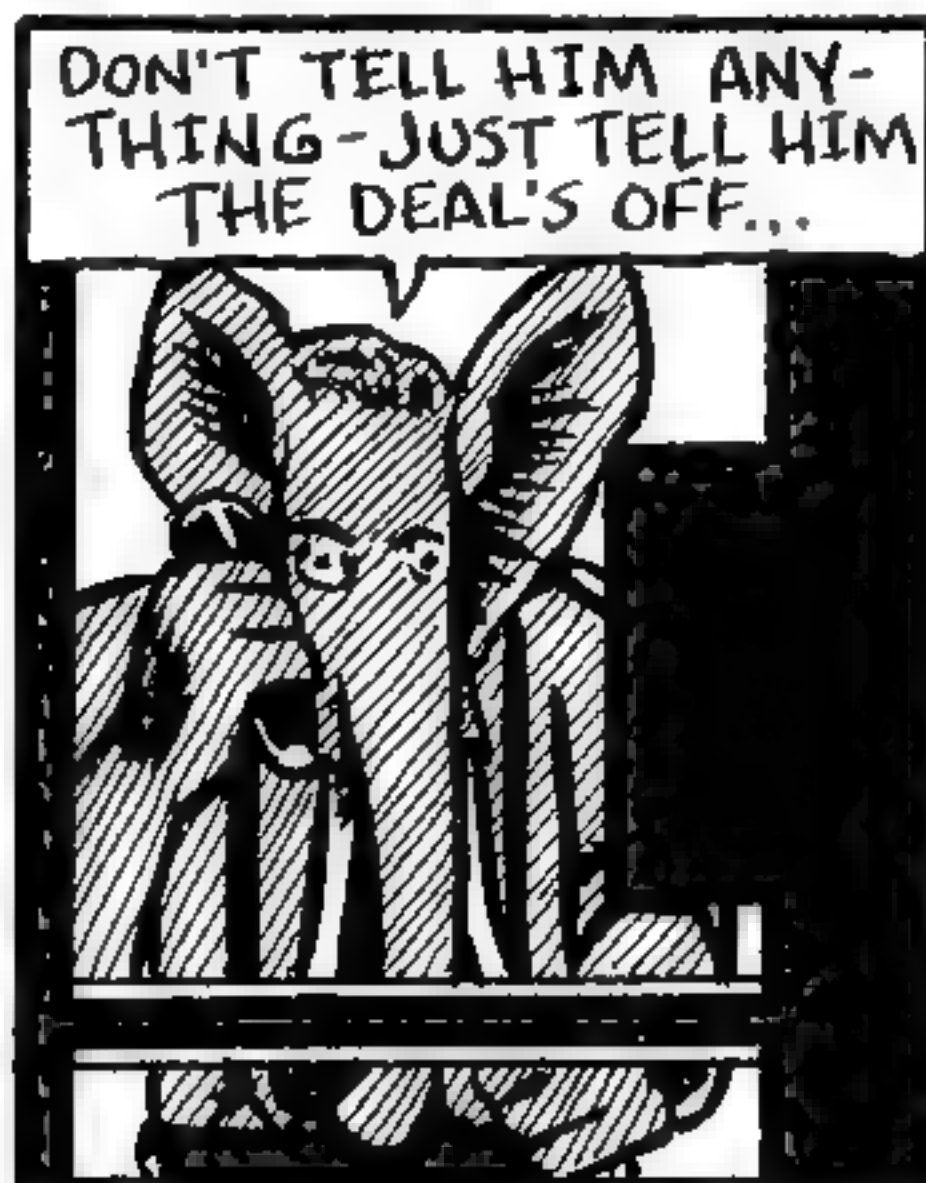
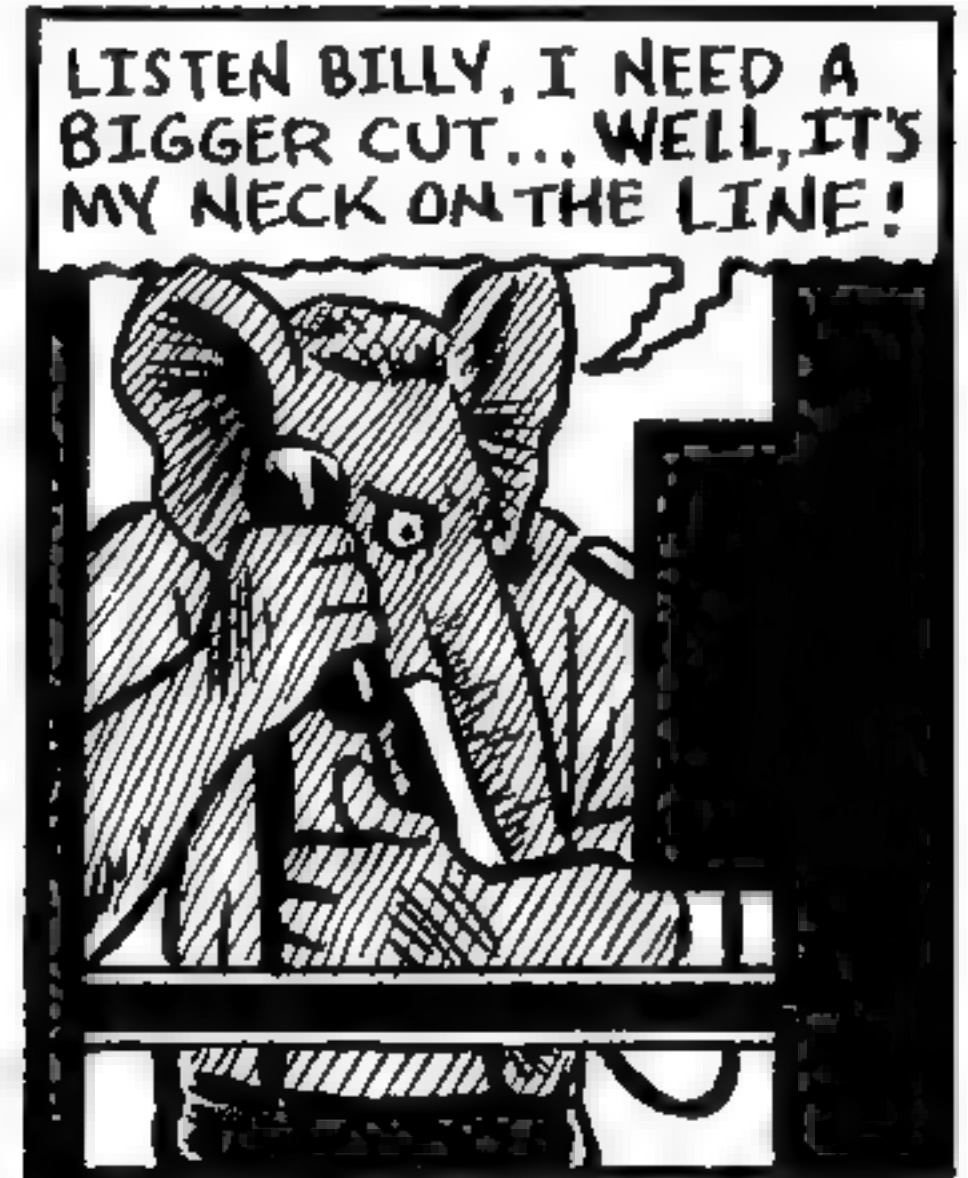
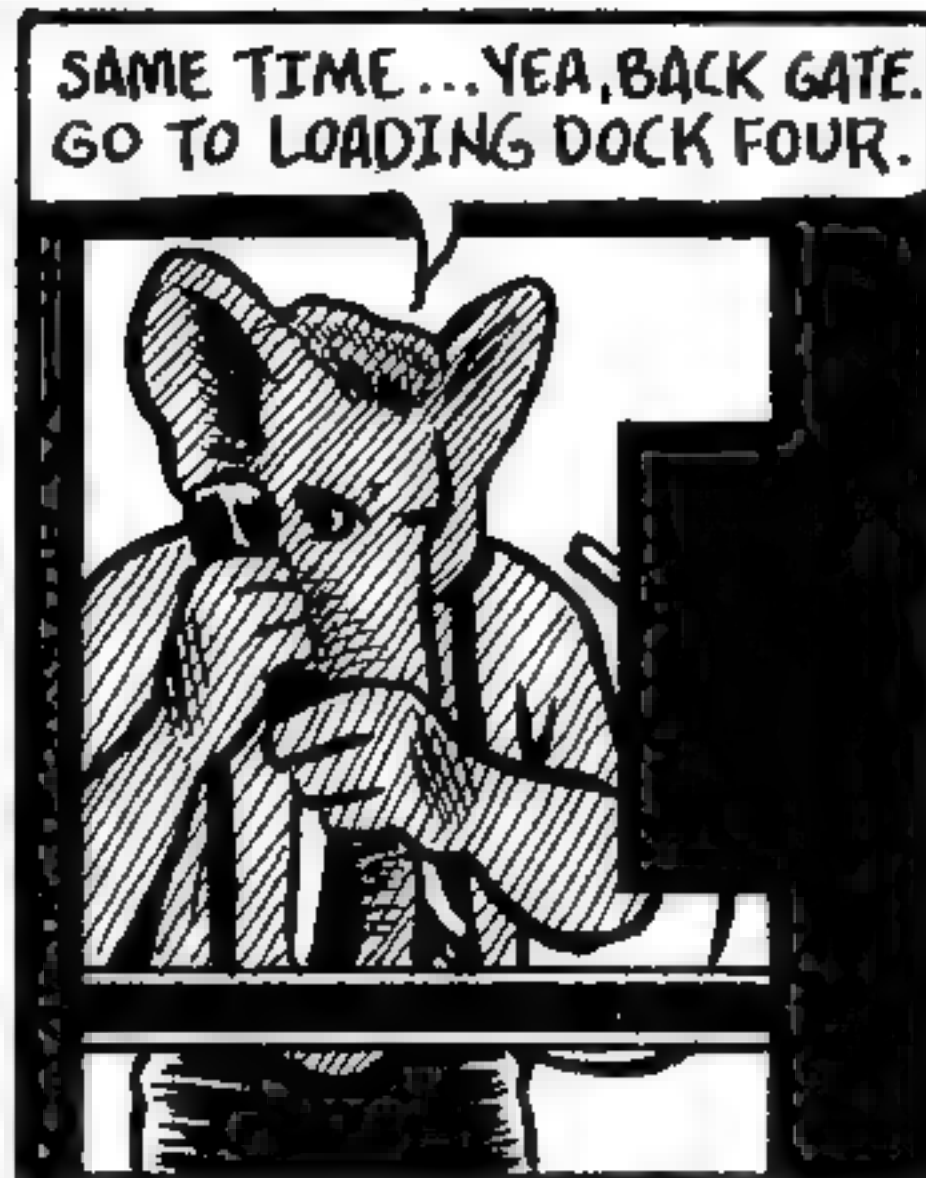
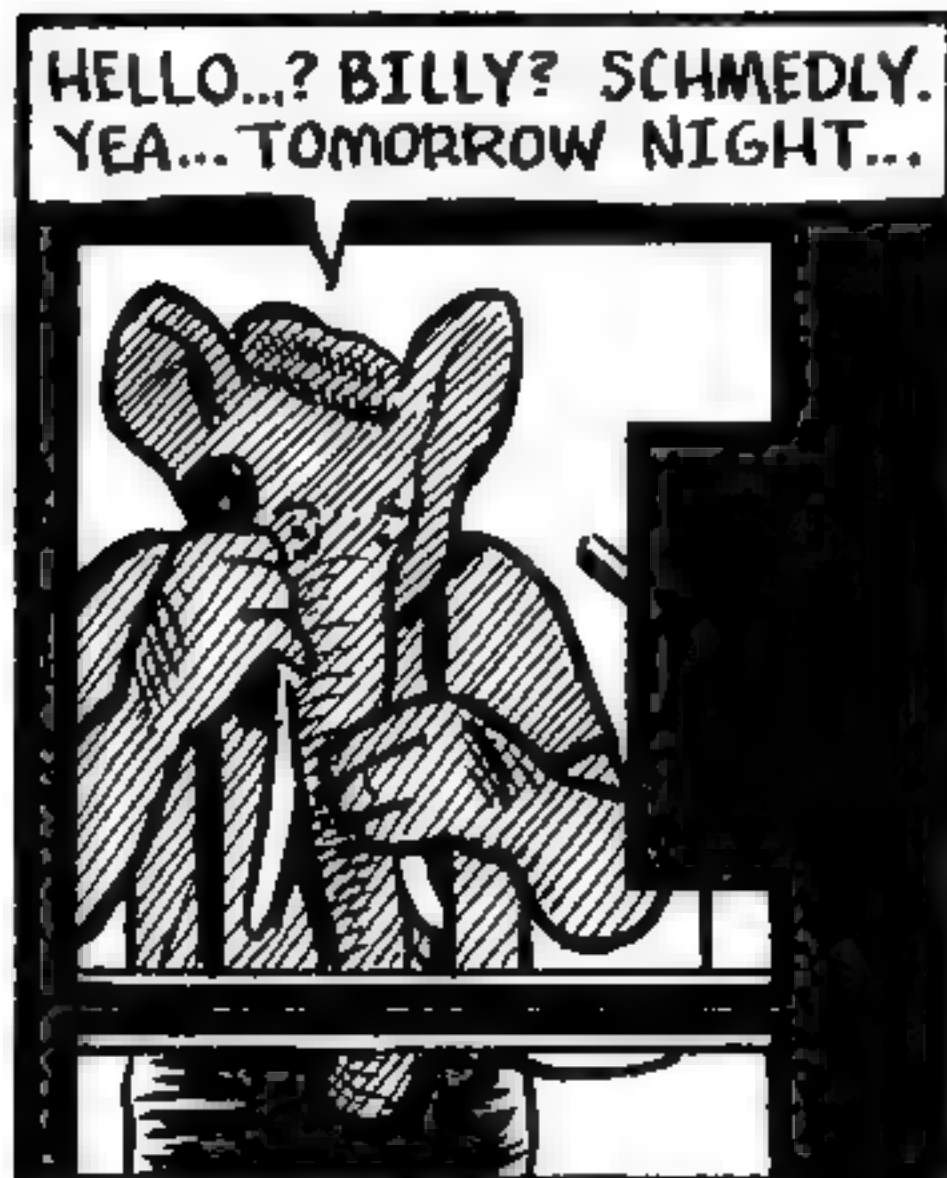
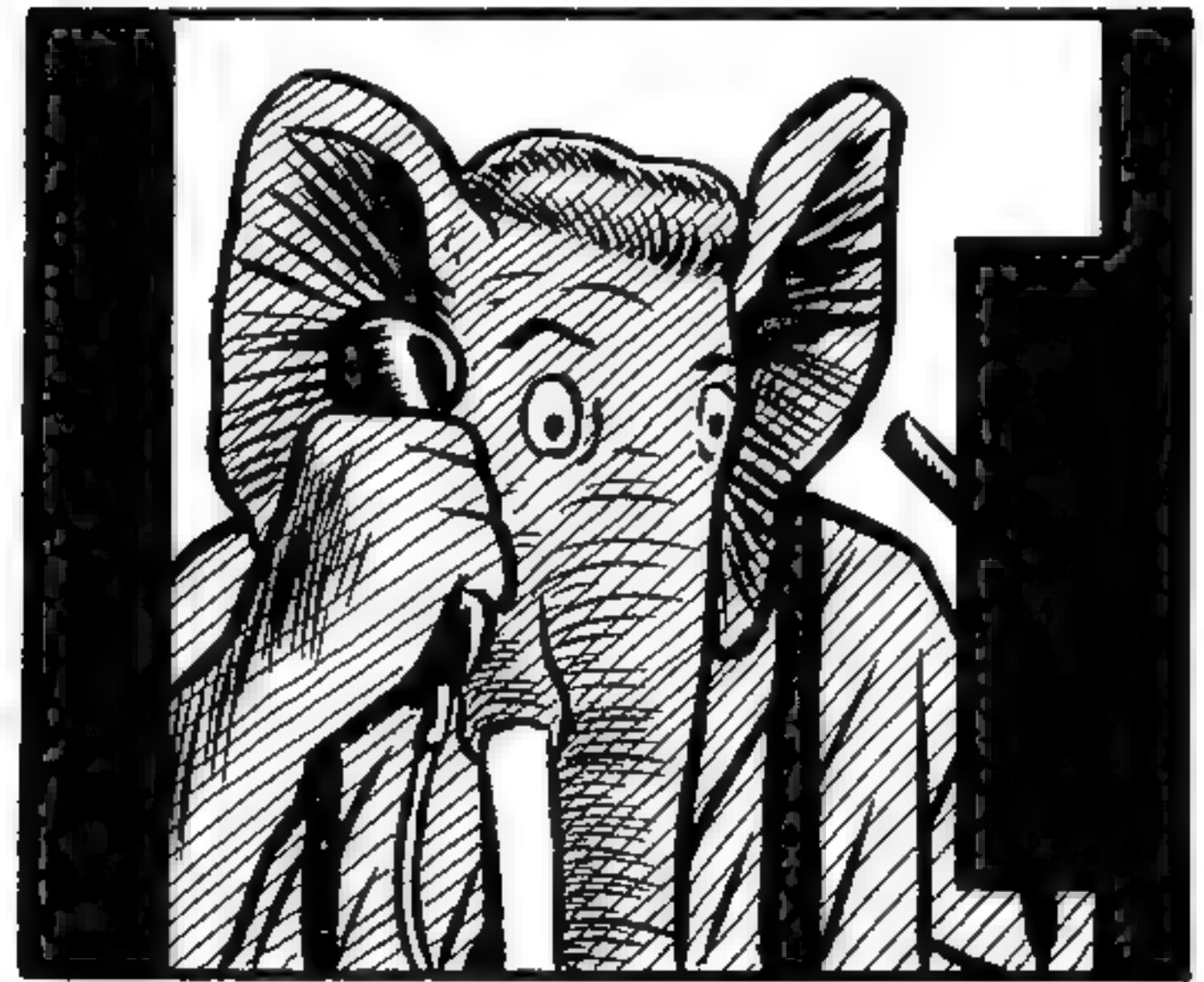


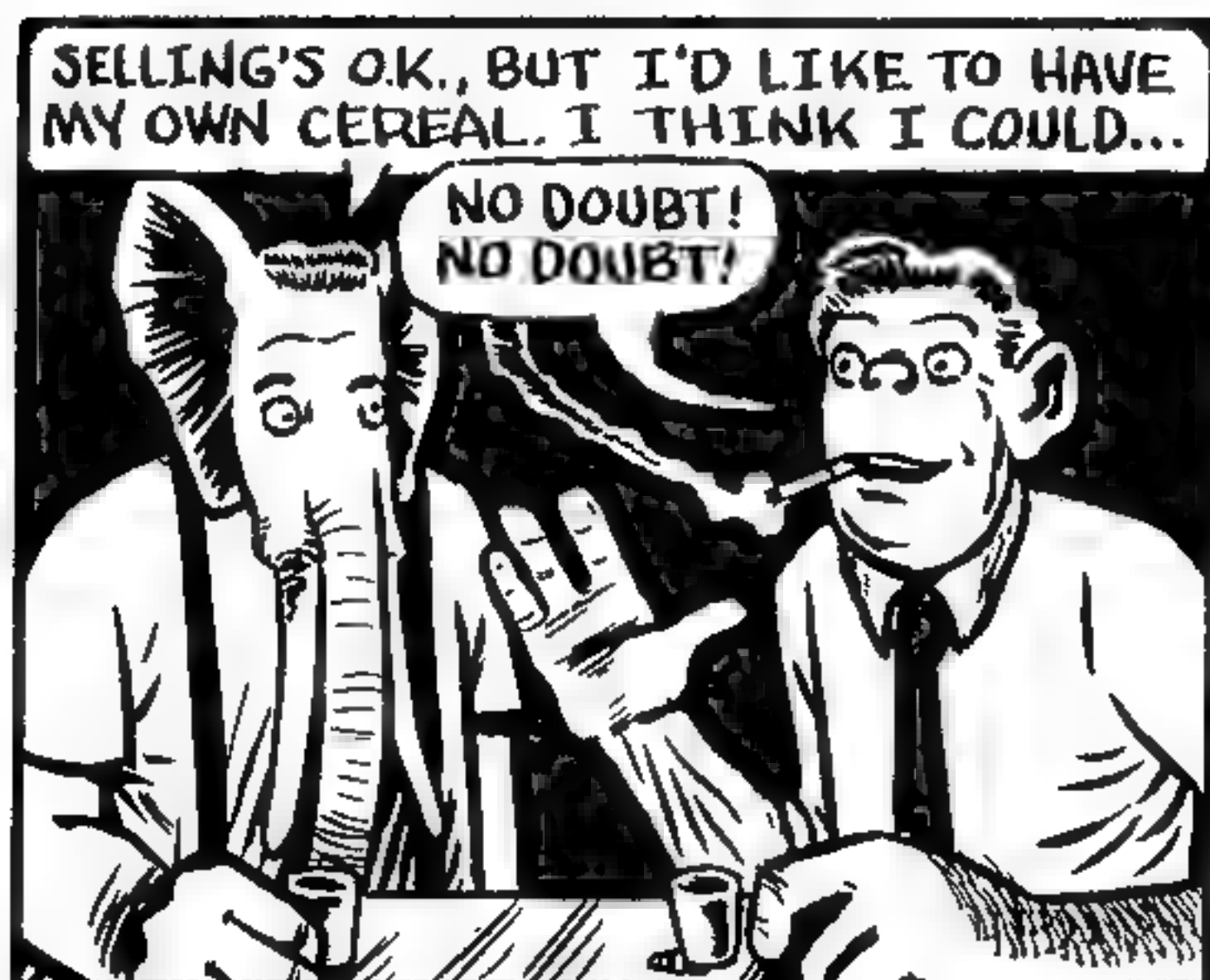
I HOPE THE GUY'S NOT
IN ANY SORT OF TROUBLE—
SEEMED LIKE AN O.K. GUY...

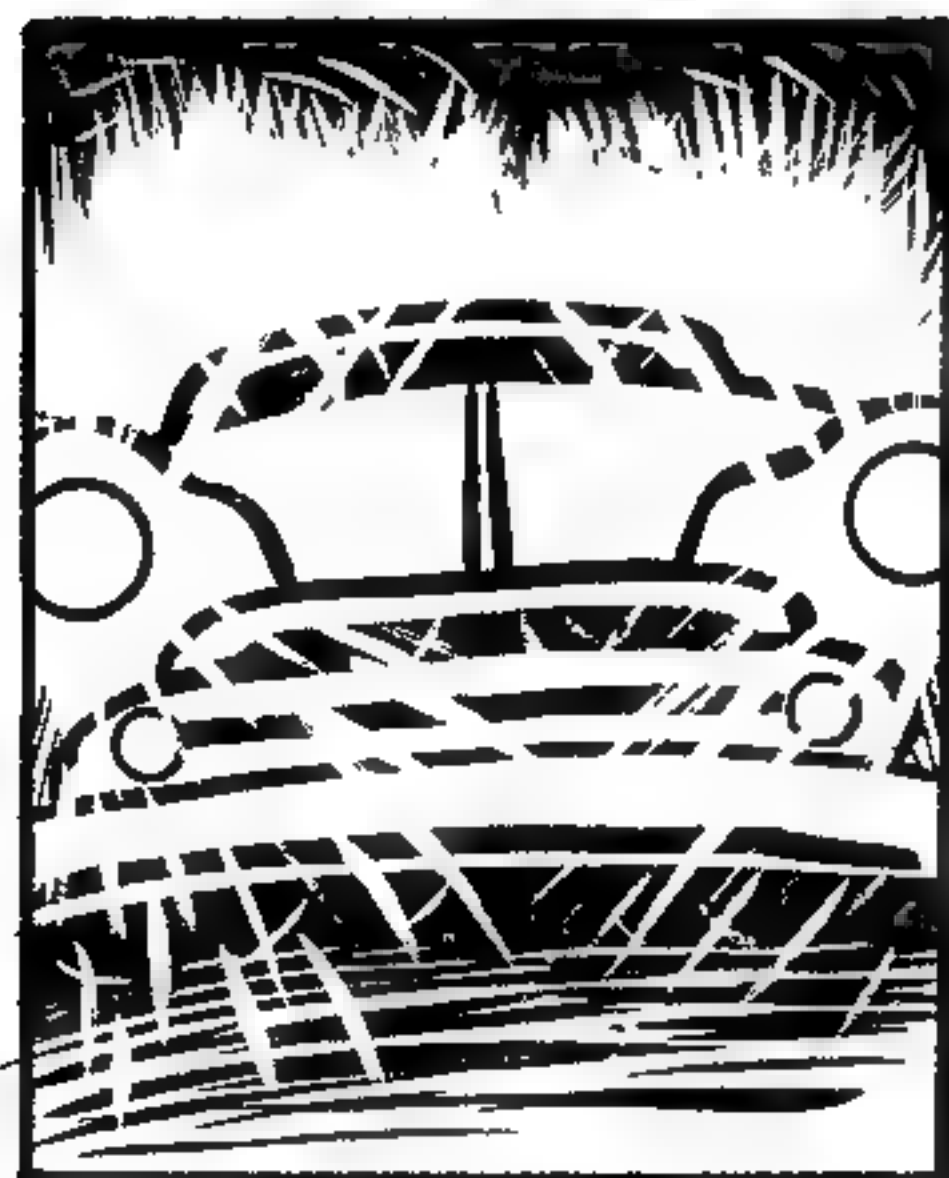
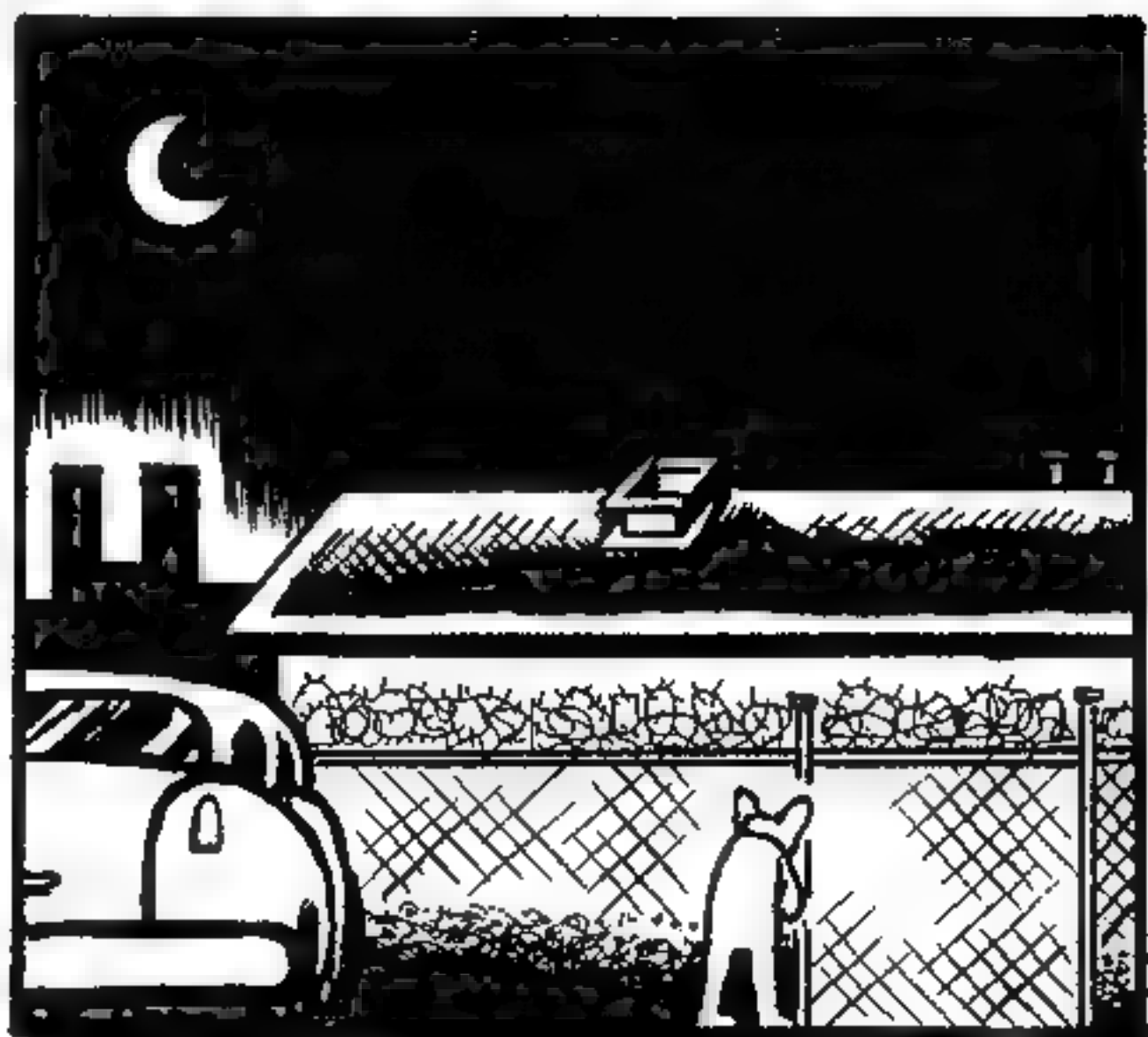


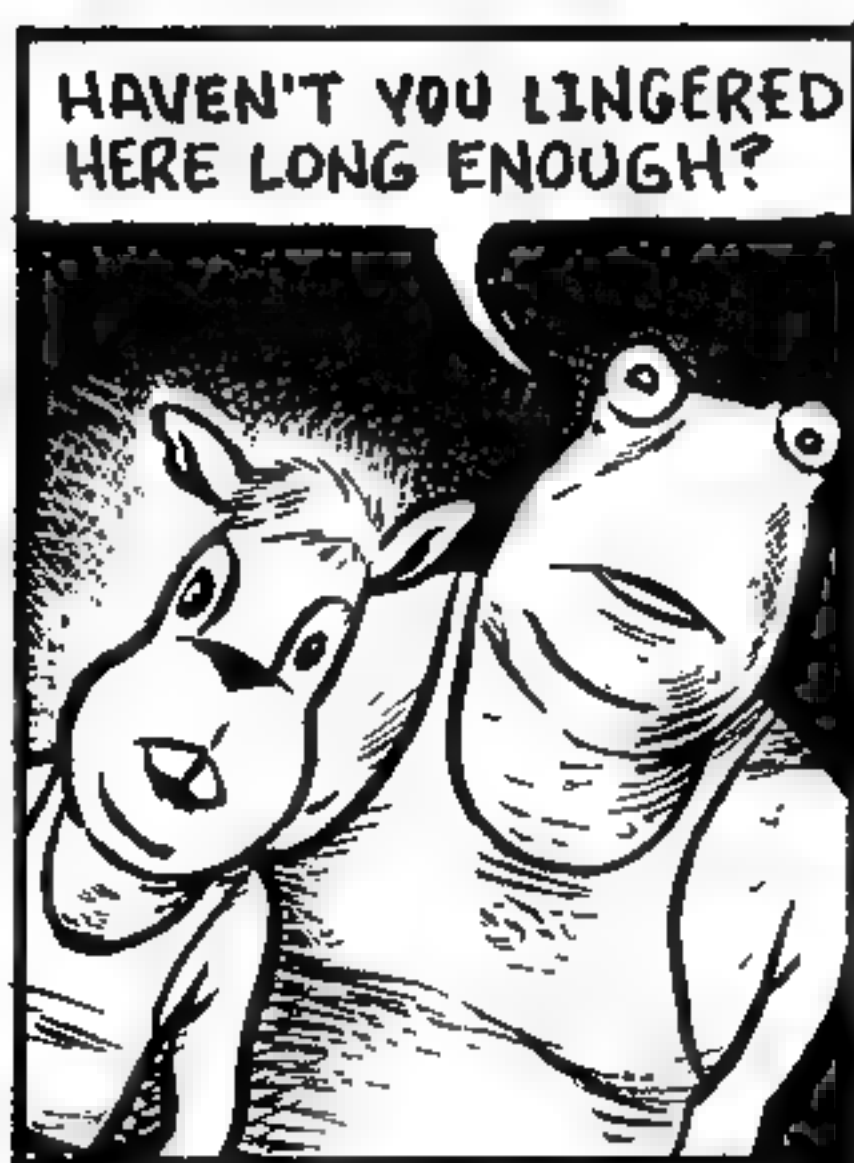
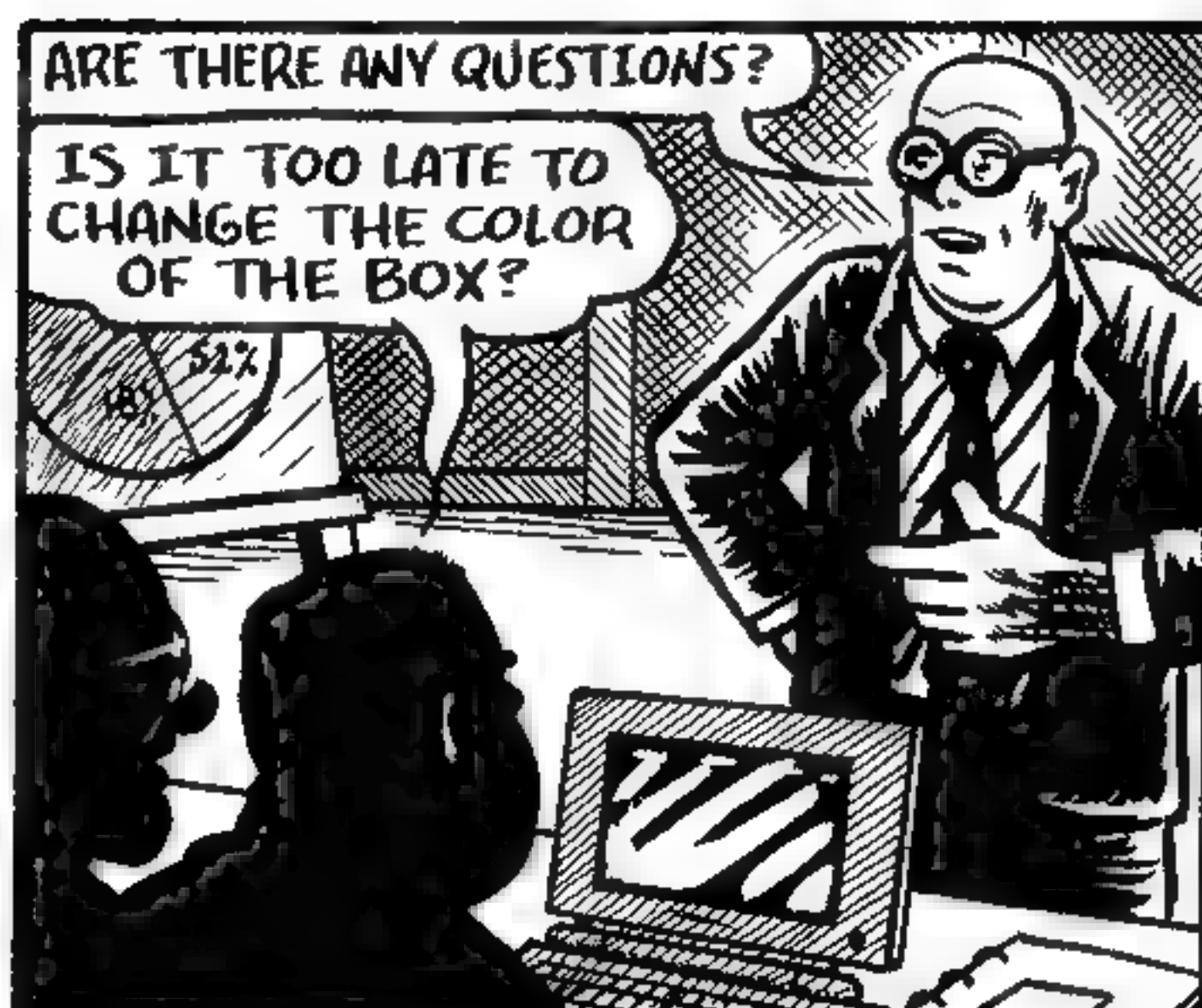
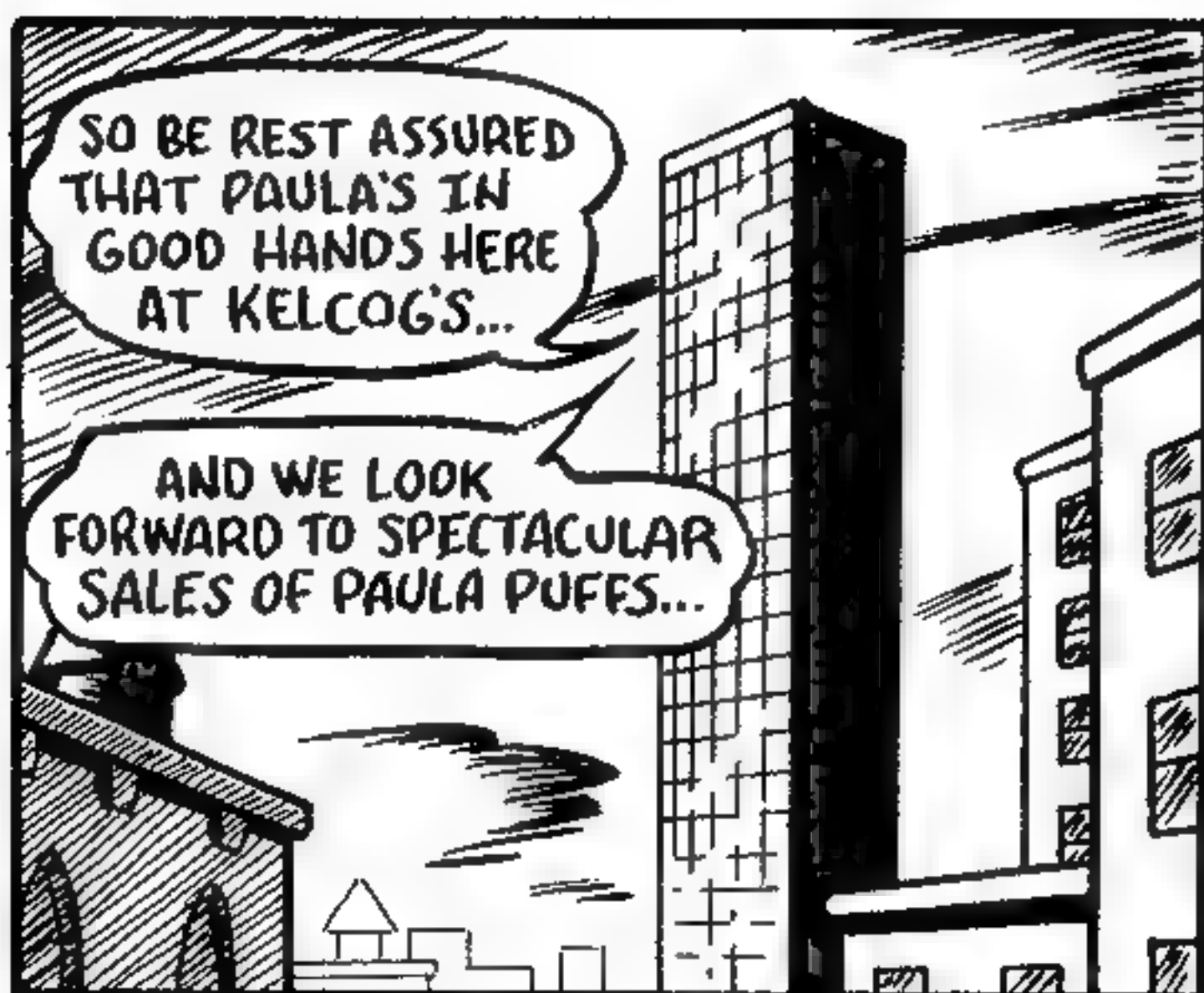
AND MY BACK—YES SIR!
FEELS BETTER THAN EVER!

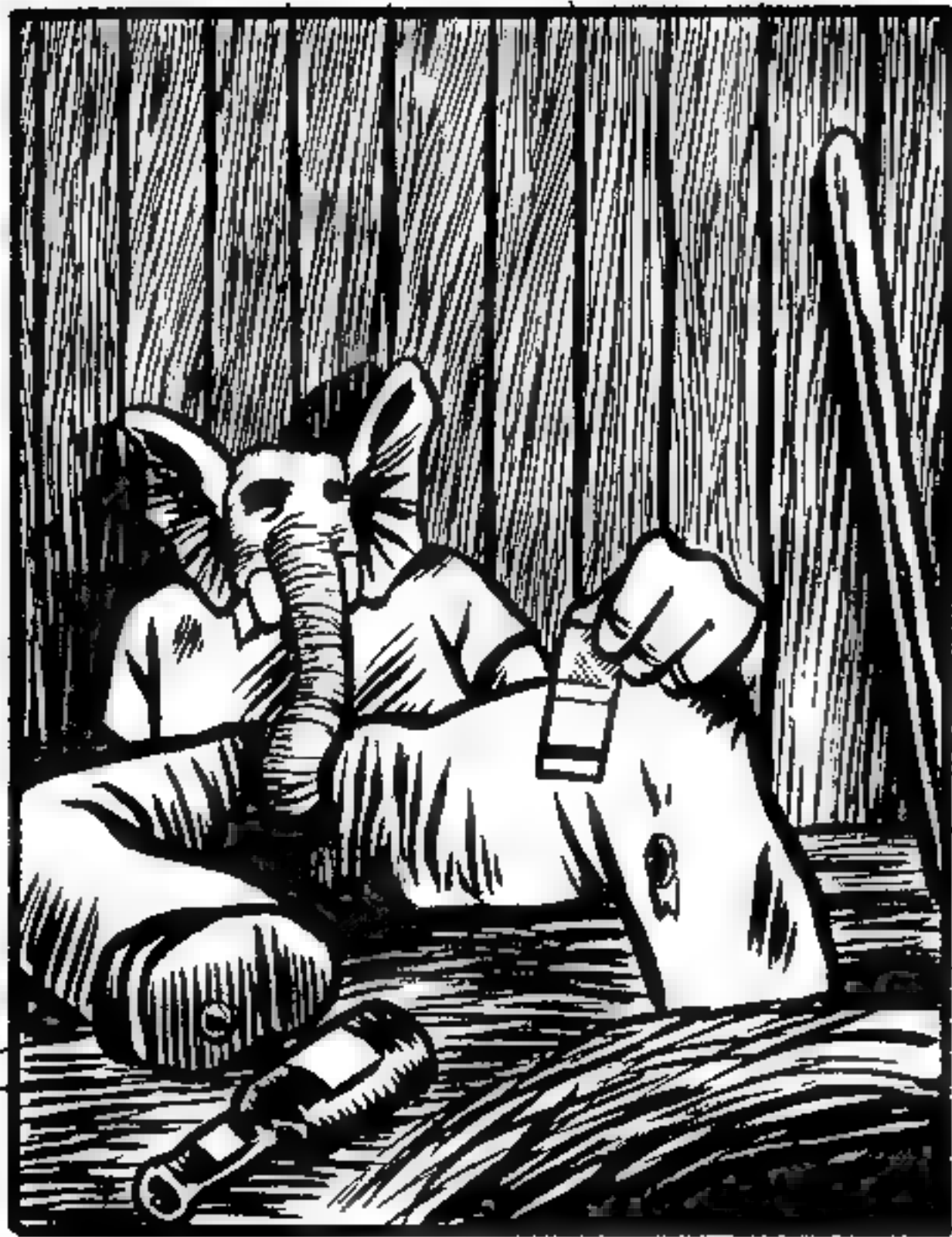


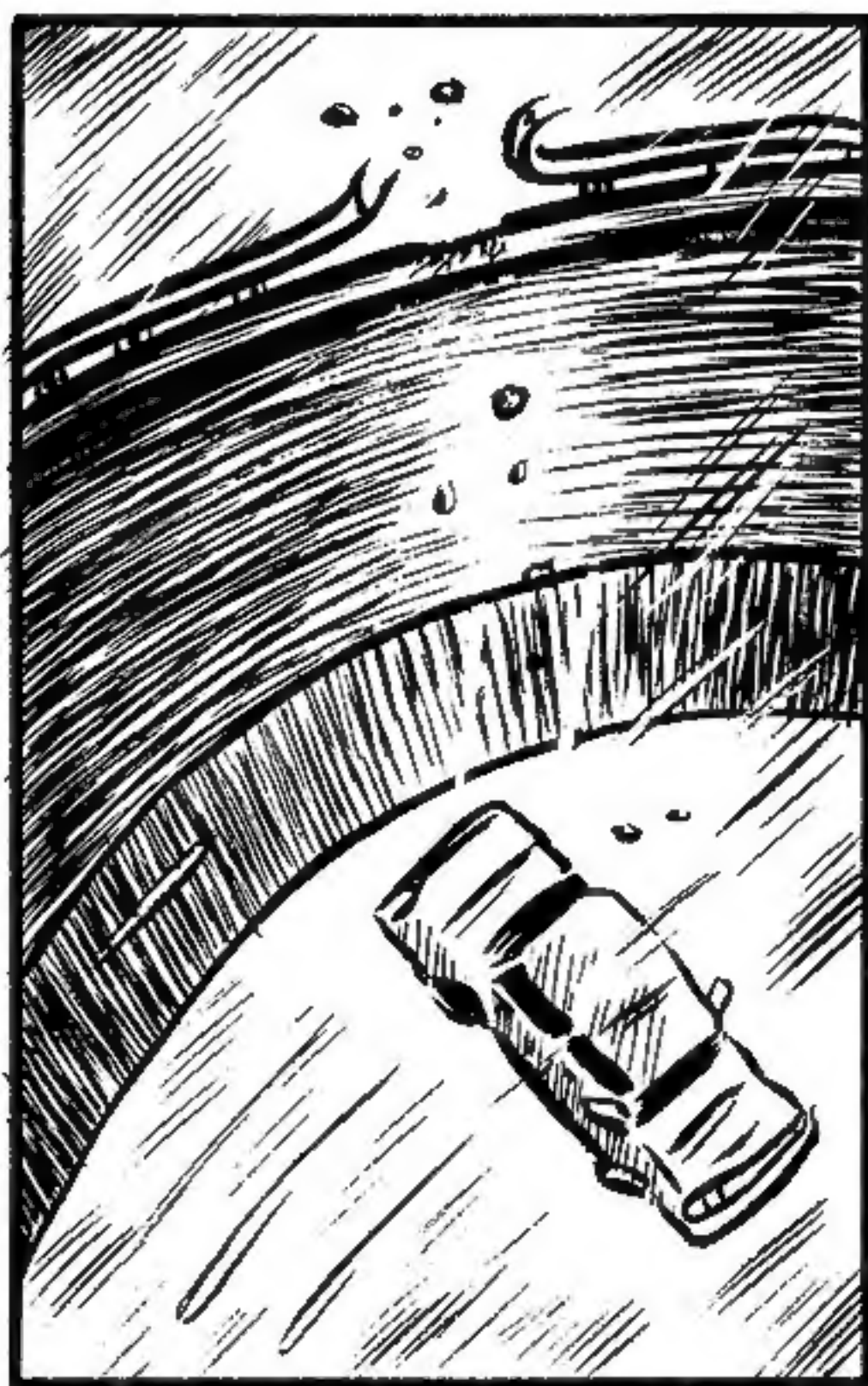














To be continued...



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FRONT COVER COLOR BY MARK LANG

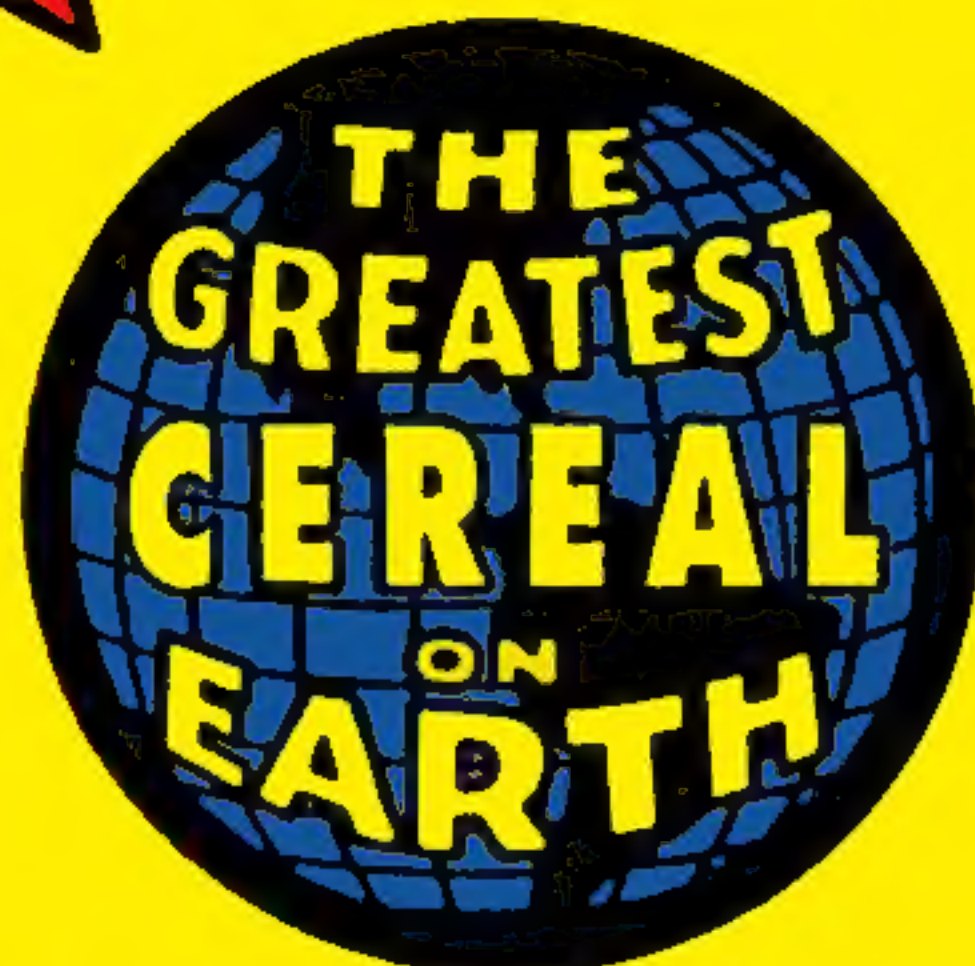
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the **CLOWN** in
a **TOP-NOTCH**
BREAKFAST
UNDER the
BIGTOP



CEREAL CIRCUS
BRAND CEREALS,
the **WORLD'S**
BIGGEST
MENAGERIE of
FUN and **FLAVOR,**
WILL BURST
FROM YOUR BOWL

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